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Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

COMING HOME: A CRY.



N the turnpike-road, between Casterbridge and Weatherbury, and about a mile from the latter place, is one of those steep long ascents which pervade the highways of this undulating district. In returning from market it is usual for the farmers and other gig-gentry to alight at the bottom and walk up.

One Saturday evening in the month of October Bathsheba's vehicle was duly creeping up this incline. She was sitting listlessly in the second seat of the gig, whilst walking beside her in a farmer's mar-

keting suit of unusually fashionable cut was an erect, well-made young man. Though on foot, he held the reins and whip, and occasionally aimed light cuts at the horse's ear with the end of the lash, as a recreation. This man was her husband, formerly Sergeant Troy, who, having bought his discharge with Bathsheba's money, was gradually transforming himself into a farmer

of a spirited and very modern school. People of unalterable ideas still insisted upon calling him "Sergeant" when they met him, which was in some degree owing to his having still retained the well-shaped moustache of his military days, and the soldierly bearing inseparable from his form.

"Yes, if it hadn't been for that wretched rain I should have cleared two hundred as easy as looking, my love," he was saying. "Don't you see, it altered all the chances? To speak like a book I once read, wet weather is the narrative, and fine days are the episodes, of our country's history; now, isn't that true?"

"But the time of year is come for changeable weather."

"Well, yes. The fact is, these autumn races are the ruin of everybody. Never did I see such a day as 'twas! 'Tis a wild open place, not far from the sands, and a drab sea rolled in towards us like liquid misery. Wind and rain—good Lord! Dark? Why, 'twas as black as my hat before the last race was run. 'Twas five o'clock, and you couldn't see the horses till they were almost in, leave alone colours. The ground was as heavy as lead, and all judgment from a fellow's experience went for nothing. Horses, riders, people, were all blown about like ships at sea. Three booths were blown over, and the wretched folk inside crawled out upon their hands and knees; and in the next field were as many as a dozen hats at one time. Aye, Pimpernel regularly stuck fast when about sixty yards off, and when I saw Policy stepping on, it did knock my heart against the lining of my ribs, I assure you, my love!"

"And you mean, Frank," said Bathsheba, sadly—her voice was painfully lowered from the fulness and vivacity of the previous summer—"that you have lost more than a hundred pounds in a month by this dreadful horseracing? Oh, Frank, it is cruel; it is foolish of you to take away my money so. We shall have to leave the farm; that will be the end of it!"

"Humbug about cruel. Now, there 'tis again—turn on the water-works; that's just like you."

"But you'll promise me not to go to Budmouth races next week, won't you?" she implored. Bathsheba was at the full depth for tears, but she maintained a dry eye.

"I don't see why I should; in fact, if it turns out to be a fine day, I was thinking of taking you."

"Never, never! I'll go a hundred miles the other way first. I hate the sound of the very word!"

"But the question of going to see the race or staying at home has very little to do with the matter. Bets are all booked safely enough before the race begins, you may depend. Whether it is a bad race for me or a good one, will have very little to do with our going there next Monday."

"But you don't mean to say that you have risked anything on this one too!" she exclaimed, with an agonised look.

"There now, don't you be a little fool. Wait till you are told. Why, Bathsheba, you've lost all the pluck and sauciness you formerly had, and

upon my life if I had known what a chicken-hearted creature you were under all your boldness, I'd never have—I know what."

A flash of indignation might have been seen in Bathsheba's dark eyes as she looked resolutely ahead after this reply. They moved on without further speech, some early-withered leaves from the beech trees which hooded the road at this spot occasionally spinning downward across their path to the earth.

A woman appeared on the brow of the hill. The ridge was so abrupt that she was very near the husband and wife before she became visible. Troy had turned towards the gig to remount, and whilst putting his foot on the step the woman passed behind him.

Though the overshadowing trees and the approach of eventide enveloped them in gloom, Bathsheba could see plainly enough to discern the extreme poverty of the woman's garb, and the sadness of her face.

"Please, sir, do you know at what time Casterbridge Union-house closes at night?"

The woman said these words to Troy over his shoulder.

Troy started visibly at the sound of the voice; yet he seemed to recover presence of mind sufficient to prevent himself from giving way to his impulse to suddenly turn and face her. He said slowly—

"I don't know."

The woman, on hearing him speak, quickly looked up, examined the side of his face, and recognised the soldier under the yeoman's garb. Her face was drawn into an expression which had gladness and agony both among its elements. She uttered a hysterical cry, and fell down.

"Oh, poor thing!" exclaimed Bathsheba, instantly preparing to alight.

"Stay where you are, and attend to the horse!" said Troy, peremptorily, throwing her the reins and the whip. "Walk the horse to the top: I'll see to the woman."

"But I ——"

"Do you hear? Clk—Poppet!"

The horse, gig, and Bathsheba moved on.

"How on earth did you come here? I thought you were miles away, or dead! Why didn't you write to me?" said Troy to the woman, in a strangely gentle, yet hurried voice, as he lifted her up.

"I feared to."

"Have you any money?"

"None."

"Good Heaven—I wish I had more to give you! Here's—wretched—the merest trifle. It is every farthing I have left. I have none but what my wife gives me, you know, and I can't ask her now."

The woman made no answer.

"I have only another moment," continued Troy; "and now listen. Where are you going to-night? Casterbridge Union?"

"Yes; I thought to go there."

"You shan't go there: yet, wait. Yes, perhaps for to-night; I can

do nothing better—worse luck. Sleep there to-night, and stay there to-morrow. Monday is the first free day I have; and on Monday morning at ten exactly meet me on Casterbridge Bridge. I'll bring all the money I can muster. You shan't want—I'll see that, Fanny; then I'll get you a lodging somewhere. Good-bye till then. I am a brute—but good-bye!"

After advancing the distance which completed the ascent of the hill, Bathsheba turned her head. The woman was upon her feet, and Bathsheba saw her withdrawing from Troy, and going feebly down the hill. Troy then came on towards his wife, stepped into the gig, took the reins from her hand, and without making any observation whipped the horse into a trot. He was rather pale.

"Do you know who that woman was?" said Bathsheba, looking searchingly into his face.

"I do," he said, looking boldly back into hers.

"I thought you did," said she, with angry hauteur, and still regarding him. "Who is she?"

He suddenly seemed to think that frankness would benefit neither of the women.

"Nothing to either of us," he said. "I know her by sight."

"What is her name?"

"How should I know her name?"

"I think you do."

"Think if you will and be ——." The sentence was completed by a smart cut of the whip round Poppet's flank, which caused the animal to start forward at a wild pace. No more was said.

CHAPTER XL.

ON CASTERBRIDGE HIGHWAY.

For a considerable time the woman walked on. Her steps became feebler, and she strained her eyes to look afar upon the naked road, now indistinct amid the penumbæ of night. At length her onward walk dwindled to the merest totter, and she opened a gate within which was a haystack. Underneath this she sat down and presently slept.

When the woman awoke it was to find herself in the depths of a moonless and starless night. A heavy unbroken crust of cloud stretched across the sky, shutting out every speck of heaven; and a distant halo which hung over the town of Casterbridge was visible against the black concave, the luminosity appearing the brighter by its great contrast with the circumscribing darkness. Towards this weak, soft glow the woman turned her eyes.

"If I could only get there!" she said. "Meet him the day after to-morrow: God help me! Perhaps I shall be in my grave before then."

A clock from the far depths of shadow struck the hour, one, in

a small, attenuated tone. After midnight the voice of a clock seems to lose in breadth as much as in length, and to diminish its sonorousness to a thin falsetto.

Afterwards a light—two lights—arose from the remote shade, and grew larger. A carriage rolled along the road, and passed the gate. It probably contained some late diners-out. The beams from one lamp shone for a moment upon the crouching woman, and threw her face into vivid relief. The face was young in the groundwork, old in the finish; the general contours were flexuous and childlike, but the finer lineaments had begun to be sharp and thin.

The pedestrian stood up, apparently with a revived determination, and looked around. The road appeared to be familiar to her, and she carefully scanned the fence as she slowly walked along. Presently there became visible a dim white shape; it was a milestone. She drew her fingers across its face to feel the marks.

"Three!" she said.

She leant against the stone as a means of rest for a short interval, then bestirred herself, and again pursued her way. For a lengthy distance she bore up bravely, afterwards flagging as before. This was beside a lone hazel copse, wherein heaps of white chips strewn upon the leafy ground showed that woodmen had been faggoting and making hurdles during the day. Now there was not a rustle, not a breeze, not the faintest clash of twigs to keep her company. The woman looked over the gate, opened it, and went in. Close to the entrance stood a row of faggots, bound and unbound, together with stakes of all sizes.

For a few seconds the wayfarer stood with that tense stillness which signifies itself to be not the end, but merely the suspension, of a previous motion. Her attitude was that of a person who listens, either to the external world of sound, or to the imagined discourse of thought. A close criticism might have detected signs proving that she was intent on the latter alternative. Moreover, as was shown by what followed, she was oddly exercising the faculty of invention upon the speciality of the clever *Jacquet Droz*, the designer of automatic substitutes for human limbs.

By the aid of the *Casterbridge* aurora, and by feeling with her hands, the woman selected two sticks from the heaps. These sticks were nearly straight to the height of three or four feet, where each branched into a fork like the letter Y. She sat down, snapped off the small upper twigs, and carried the remainder with her into the road. She placed one of these forks under each arm as a crutch, tested them, timidly threw her whole weight upon them—so little that it was—and swung herself forward. The girl had made for herself a material aid.

The crutches answered well. The pat of her feet, and the tap of her sticks upon the highway, were all the sounds that came from the traveller now. She had passed a second milestone by a good long distance, and began to look wistfully towards the bank as if calculating upon another milestone soon. The crutches, though so very useful, had their limits

of power. Mechanism only transmutes labour, being powerless to abstract it, and the original quantum of exertion was not cleared away; it was thrown into the body and arms. She was exhausted, and each swing forward became fainter. At last she swayed sideways, and fell.

Here she lay, a shapeless heap, for ten minutes and more. The morning wind began to boom dully over the flats, and to move afresh dead leaves which had lain still since yesterday. The woman desperately turned round upon her knees, and next rose to her feet. Steadying herself by the help of one crutch she essayed a step, then another, then a third, using the crutches now as walking-sticks only. Thus she progressed till the beginning of a long railed fence came into view. She staggered across to the first post, clung to it, and looked around. Another milestone was on the opposite side of the road.

The Casterbridge lights were now individually visible. It was getting towards morning, and vehicles might be hoped for if not expected soon. She listened. There was not a sound of life save that acme and sublimation of all dismal sounds, the bark of a fox, its three hollow notes being rendered at intervals of a minute with the precision of a funeral bell.

"One mile more," the woman murmured. "No, less," she added, after a pause. "The mile is to the Town Hall, and my resting-place is on this side Casterbridge. Three-quarters of a mile, and there I am!" After an interval she again spoke. "Five or six steps to a yard—six perhaps. I have to go twelve hundred yards. A hundred times six, six hundred. Twelve times that. O pity me, Lord!"

Holding to the rails she advanced, thrusting one hand forward upon the rail, then the other, then leaning over it whilst she dragged her feet on beneath.

This woman was not given to soliloquy; but extremity of feeling lessens the individuality of the weak, as it increases that of the strong. She said again in the same tone, "I'll believe that the end lies five posts forward, and no further, and so get strength to pass them."

This was a practical application of the principle that a half feigned and factitious faith is better than no faith at all.

She passed five posts, and held on to the fifth.

"I'll pass five more by believing my longed-for spot is at the next fifth. I can do it."

She passed five more.

"It lies only five further."

She passed five more.

"But it is five further."

She passed them.

"The end of these railings is the end of my journey," she said, when the end was in view.

She crawled to the end. During the effort each breath of the woman went into the air as if never to return again.

"Now for the truth of the matter," she said, sitting down. "The

truth is, that I have less than half a mile." Self-beguilement with what she had known all the time to be false had given her strength to come a quarter of a mile that she would have been powerless to face in the lump. The artifice showed that the woman, by some mysterious intuition, had grasped the paradoxical truth that blindness may operate more vigorously than prescience, and the short-sighted effect more than the far-seeing; that limitation, and not comprehensiveness, is needed for striking a blow.

The half-mile stood now before the sick and weary woman like a stolid Juggernaut. It was an impassive King of her world. The road here ran across a level plateau with only a bank on either side. She surveyed the wide space, the lights, herself, sighed, and lay down on the bank.

Never was ingenuity exercised so sorely as the traveller here exercised hers. Every conceivable aid, method, stratagem, mechanism, by which these last desperate eight hundred yards could be overpassed by a human being unperceived, was revolved in her busy brain, and dismissed as impracticable. She thought of sticks, wheels, crawling—she even thought of rolling. But the exertion demanded by either of these latter two was greater than to walk erect. The faculty of contrivance was worn out. Hopelessness had come at last.

"No further!" she whispered, and closed her eyes.

From the stripe of shadow on the opposite side of the way a portion of shade seemed to detach itself and move into isolation upon the pale white of the road. It glided noiselessly towards the recumbent woman.

She became conscious of something touching her hand; it was softness and it was warmth. She opened her eyes, and the substance touched her face. A dog was licking her cheek.

He was a huge, heavy, and quiet creature, standing darkly against the low horizon, and at least two feet higher than the present position of her eyes. Whether Newfoundland, mastiff, bloodhound, or what not, it was impossible to say. He seemed to be of too strange and mysterious a nature to belong to any variety among those of popular nomenclature. Being thus assignable to no breed he was the ideal embodiment of canine greatness—a generalisation from what was common to all. Night, in its sad, solemn, and benevolent aspect, apart from its stealthy and cruel side, was personified in this form. Darkness endows the small and ordinary ones among mankind with poetical power, and even the suffering woman threw her idea into figure.

In her reclining position she looked up to him just as in earlier times she had, when standing, looked up to a man. The animal, who was as homeless as she, respectfully withdrew a step or two when the woman moved, and, seeing that she did not repulse him, he licked her hand again.

A thought moved within her like lightning. "Perhaps I can make use of him—I might do it then!"

She pointed in the direction of Casterbridge, and the dog seemed to misunderstand: he trotted on. Then, finding she could not follow, he came back and whined.

The ultimate and saddest singularity of woman's effort and invention was reached when, with a quickened breathing, she rose to a stooping posture, and, resting her two little arms upon the shoulders of the dog, leant firmly thereon, and murmured stimulating words. Whilst she sorrowed in her heart she cheered with her voice, and what was stranger than that the strong should need encouragement from the weak was that cheerfulness should be so well simulated by such utter dejection. Her friend moved forward slowly, and she with small mincing steps moved forward beside him, half her weight being thrown upon the animal. Sometimes she sank as she had sunk from walking erect, from the crutches, from the rails. The dog, who now thoroughly understood her desire and her incapacity, was frantic in his distress on these occasions; he would tug at her dress and run forward. She always called him back, and it was now to be observed that the woman listened for human sounds only to avoid them. It was evident that she had an object in keeping her presence on the road and her forlorn state unknown.

Their progress was necessarily very slow. They reached the brow of the hill, and the Casterbridge lamps lay beneath them like fallen Pleiads as they walked down the incline. Thus the distance was passed, and the goal was reached. On this much desired spot outside the town rose a picturesque building. Originally it had been a mere case to hold people. The shell had been so thin, so devoid of excrescence, and so closely drawn over the accommodation granted that the grim character of what was beneath showed through it, as the shape of a body is visible under a winding sheet.

Then Nature, as if offended, lent a hand. Masses of ivy grew up, completely covering the walls, till the place looked like an abbey; and it was discovered that the view from the front, over the Casterbridge chimneys, was one of the most magnificent in the county. A neighbouring earl once said that he would give up a year's rental to have at his own door the view enjoyed by the inmates from theirs—and very probably the inmates would have given up the view for his year's rental.

This green edifice consisted of a central mass and two wings, whereon stood as sentinels a few slim chimneys, now gurgling sorrowfully to the slow wind. In the middle was a gate, and by the gate a bell-pull formed of a hanging wire. The woman raised herself as high as possible upon her knees, and could just reach the handle. She moved it and fell forwards in a bowed attitude, her face upon her bosom.

It was getting on towards six o'clock, and sounds of movement were to be heard inside the building which was the haven of rest to this wearied soul. A little door in the large one was opened, and a man appeared inside. He discerned the panting heap of clothes, went back for a light, and came again. He entered a second time and returned with two women.

These lifted the prostrate figure and assisted her in through the doorway. The man then closed the door.

"How did she get here?" said one of the women.

"The Lord knows," said the other.

"There is a dog outside," murmured the overcome traveller. "Where is he gone? He helped me."

"I stoned him away," said the man.

The little procession then moved forward—the man in front bearing the light, the two bony women next, supporting between them the small and supple one. Thus they entered the door and disappeared.

CHAPTER XLI.

SUSPICION: FANNY IS SENT FOR.

BATHSHEBA said very little to her husband all that evening of their return from market, and he was not disposed to say much to her. He exhibited the unpleasant combination of a restless condition with a silent tongue. The next day, which was Sunday, passed nearly in the same manner as regarded their taciturnity, Bathsheba going to church both morning and afternoon. This was the day before the Budmouth races. In the evening Troy said suddenly,

"Bathsheba, could you let me have twenty pounds?"

Her countenance instantly sank. "Twenty pounds?" she said.

"The fact is, I want it badly." The anxiety upon Troy's face was unusual and very marked. It was a culmination of the mood he had been in all the day.

"Ah! for those races to-morrow."

Troy for the moment made no reply. Her mistake had its advantages to a man who shrank from having his mind inspected as he did now. "Well, suppose I do want it for races?" he said, at last.

"Oh, Frank!" Bathsheba replied, and there was such a volume of entreaty in the words. "Only such a few weeks ago you said that I was far sweeter than all your other pleasures put together, and that you would give them all up for me; and now, won't you give up this one, which is more a worry than a pleasure? Do, Frank. Come, let me fascinate you by all I can do—by pretty words and pretty looks, and everything I can think of—to stay at home. Say yes to your wife—say yes!"

The tenderest and softest phases of Bathsheba's nature were prominent now—advanced impulsively for his acceptance, without any of the disguises and defences which the wariness of her character when she was cool too frequently threw over them. Few men could have resisted the arch yet dignified entreaty of the beautiful face, thrown a little back and sideways in the well-known attitude that expresses more than the words it accompanies, and which seems to have been designed for these special occasions. Had the woman not been his wife Troy would have succumbed instantly; as it was, he thought he would not deceive her longer.

"The money is not wanted for racing debts at all," he said.

"What is it for?" she asked. "You worry me a great deal by these mysterious responsibilities, Frank."

Troy hesitated. He did not now love her enough to allow himself to be carried too far by her ways. Yet it was necessary to be civil. "You wrong me by such a suspicious manner," he said. "Such strait-waist-coating as you treat me to is not becoming in you at so early a date."

"I think that I have a right to grumble a little if I pay," she said, with features between a smile and a pout.

"Exactly; and, the former being done, suppose we proceed to the latter. Bathsheba, fun is all very well, but don't go too far, or you may have cause to regret something."

She reddened. "I do that already," she said, quickly.

"What do you regret?"

"That my romance has come to an end."

"All romances end at marriage."

"I wish you wouldn't talk like that. You grieve me to my soul by being smart at my expense."

"You are dull enough at mine. I believe you hate me."

"Not you—only your vices. I do hate them."

"I would be much more becoming if you set yourself to cure them. Come, let's strike a balance with the twenty pounds, and be friends."

She gave a sigh of resignation. "I have about that sum here for household expenses. If you must have it, take it."

"Very good. Thank you. I expect I shall have gone away before you are in to breakfast to-morrow."

"And must you go? Ah! there was a time, Frank, when it would have taken a good many promises to other people to drag you away from me. You used to call me darling, then. But it doesn't matter to you how my days are passed now."

"I must go, in spite of sentiment." Troy, as he spoke, looked at his watch, and, apparently actuated by *non lucendo* principles, opened the case at the back, revealing, snugly stowed within it, a small coil of hair.

Bathsheba's eyes had been accidentally lifted at that moment, and she saw the action, and saw the hair. She flushed in pain and surprise, and some words escaped her before she had thought whether or not it was wise to utter them. "A woman's curl of hair!" she said. "Oh, Frank, whose is that?"

Troy had instantly closed his watch. He carelessly replied, as one who cloaked some feelings that the sight had stirred. "Why, yours, of course. Whose should it be? I had quite forgotten that I had it."

"What a dreadful fib, Frank!"

"I tell you I had forgotten it!" he said, loudly.

"I don't mean that—it was yellow hair."

"Nonsense."

"That's insulting me. I know it was yellow. Now whose was it? I want to know."

"Very well—I'll tell you, so make no more ado. It is the hair of a young woman I was going to marry before I knew you."

"You ought to tell me her name, then."

"I cannot do that."

"Is she married yet?"

"No."

"Is she alive?"

"Yes."

"Is she pretty?"

"Yes."

"It is wonderful how she can be, poor thing, under such an awful affliction."

"Affliction—what affliction?" he enquired, quickly.

"Having hair of that dreadful colour."

"Oh—ho—I like that!" said Troy, recovering himself. "Why, her hair has been admired by everybody who has seen her since she has worn it loose, which has not been long. It is beautiful hair. People used to turn their heads to look at it, poor girl!"

"Pooh! that's nothing—that's nothing!" she exclaimed, in incipient accents of pique. "If I cared for your love as much as I used to I could say people had turned to look at mine."

"Bathsheba, don't be so fitful and jealous. You knew what married life would be like, and shouldn't have entered it if you feared these contingencies."

Troy had by this time driven her to bitterness: her heart was big in her throat, and the ducts to her eyes were painfully full. Ashamed as she was to show emotion, at last she burst out:—

"This is all I get for loving you so well! Ah! when I married you your life was dearer to me than my own. I would have died for you—how truly I can say that I would have died for you! And now you sneer at my foolishness in marrying you. Oh! is it kind to me to throw my mistake in my face? Whatever opinion you may have of my wisdom, you should not tell me of it so mercilessly, now that I am in your power."

"I can't help how things fall out," said Troy; "upon my heart, women will be the death of me!"

"Well, you shouldn't keep people's hair. You'll burn it, won't you, Frank?"

Frank went on as if he had not heard her. "There are considerations even before my consideration for you; reparation to be made—ties you know nothing of. If you repent of marrying, so do I."

Trembling now, she put her hand upon his arm, saying, in mingled tones of wretchedness and coaxing, "I only repent it if you don't love me better than any woman in the world. I don't otherwise, Frank. You don't repent because you already love somebody better than you love me, do you?"

"I don't know. Why do you say that?"

"You won't burn that curl. You like the woman who owns that pretty hair—yes; it is pretty—more beautiful than my miserable black mane! Well, it is no use; I can't help being ugly. You must like her best, if you will!"

"Until to-day, when I took it from a drawer, I have never looked upon that bit of hair for several months—that I am ready to swear."

"But just now you said 'ties;' and then, that woman we met?"

"'Twas the meeting with her that reminded me of the hair."

"Is it hers, then?"

"Yes. There, now that you have wormed it out of me, I hope you are content."

"And what are the ties?"

"Oh! that meant nothing—a mere jest."

"A mere jest!" she said, in mournful astonishment. "Can you jest when I am so wretchedly in earnest? Tell me the truth, Frank. I am not a fool, you know, although I am a woman, and have my woman's moments. Come! treat me fairly," she said, looking honestly and fearlessly into his face. "I don't want much; bare justice—that's all. Ah! once I felt I could be content with nothing less than the highest homage from the husband I should choose. Now, anything short of cruelty will content me. Yes! the independent and spirited Bathsheba is come to this!"

"For Heaven's sake don't be so desperate!" Troy said, snappishly, rising as he did so, and leaving the room.

Directly he had gone, Bathsheba burst into great sobs—dry-eyed sobs, which cut as they came, without any softening by tears. But she determined to repress all evidences of feeling. She was conquered; but she would never own it as long as she lived. Her pride was indeed brought low by despairing discoveries of her spoliation by marriage with a less pure nature than her own. She chafed to and fro in rebelliousness, like a caged leopard; her whole soul was in arms, and the blood fired her face. Until she had met Troy, Bathsheba had been proud of her position as a woman; it had been a glory to her to know that her lips had been touched by no man's on earth—that her waist had never been encircled by a lover's arm. She hated herself now. In those earlier days she had always nourished a secret contempt for girls who were the slaves of the first good-looking young fellow who should choose to salute them. She had never taken kindly to the idea of marriage in the abstract as did the majority of women she saw about her. In the turmoil of her anxiety for her lover she had agreed to marry him; but the perception that had accompanied her happiest hours on this account was rather that of self-sacrifice than of promotion and honour. Although she scarcely knew the divinity's name, Diana was the goddess whom Bathsheba instinctively adored. That she had never, by look, word or sign, encouraged a man to approach her—that she had felt herself sufficient to herself, and had in the independence of her girlish heart fancied there was a certain degradation in renouncing the simplicity of a maiden existence to become the

humbler half of an indifferent matrimonial whole—were facts now bitterly remembered. Oh, if she had never stooped to folly of this kind, respectable as it was, and could only stand again, as she had stood on the hill at Norcombe, and dare Troy or any other man to pollute a hair of her head by his interference!

The next morning she rose earlier than usual, and had the horse saddled for her ride round the farm in the customary way. When she came in at half-past eight—their usual hour for breakfasting—she was informed that her husband had risen, taken his breakfast, and driven off to Casterbridge with the gig and Poppet.

After breakfast she was cool and collected—quite herself, in fact—and she rambled to the gate, intending to walk to another quarter of the farm, which she still personally superintended as well as her duties in the house would permit, continually, however, finding herself preceded in forethought by Gabriel Oak, for whom she began to entertain the genuine friendship of a sister. Of course, she sometimes thought of him in the light of an old lover, and had momentary imaginings of what life with him as a husband would have been like; also of life with Boldwood under the same conditions. But Bathsheba, though she could feel, was not much given to futile dreaming, and her musings under this head were short and entirely confined to the times when Troy's neglect was more than ordinarily evident.

She saw coming up the hill a man like Mr. Boldwood. It was Mr. Boldwood. Bathsheba blushed painfully, and watched. The farmer stopped when still a long way off, and held up his hand to Gabriel Oak, who was in another part of the field. The two men then approached each other and seemed to engage in earnest conversation.

Thus they continued for a long time. Joseph Poorgress now passed near them, wheeling a barrow of apples up the hill to Bathsheba's residence. Boldwood and Gabriel called to him, spoke to him for a few minutes, and then all three parted, Joseph immediately coming up the hill with his barrow.

Bathsheba, who had seen this pantomime with some surprise, experienced great relief when Boldwood turned back again. "Well, what's the message, Joseph?" she said.

He set down his barrow, and, putting upon himself the refined aspect that a conversation with a lady required, spoke to Bathsheba over the gate.

"You'll never see Fanny Robin no more—use nor principal—ma'am."

"Why?"

"Because she's dead in the Union."

"Fanny dead—never!"

"Yes, ma'am."

"What did she die from?"

"I don't know for certain; but I should be inclined to think it was from general neshness of constitution. She was such a limber maid that 'a could stand no hardship, even when I knowed her, and 'a went like a

candle-snuff, so 'tis said. She was took bad in the morning, and, being quite feeble and worn out, she died in the afternoon. She belongs by law to our parish; and Mr. Boldwood is going to send a waggon this afternoon to fetch her home here and bury her."

"Indeed I shall not let Mr. Boldwood do any such thing—I shall do it. Fanny was my uncle's servant, and, although I only knew her for a couple of days, she belongs to me. How very, very sad this is!—the idea of Fanny being in a workhouse." Bathsheba had begun to know what suffering was, and she spoke with real feeling. . . . "Send across to Mr. Boldwood's, and say that Mrs. Troy will take upon herself the duty of fetching an old servant of the family. . . . We ought not to put her in a waggon; we'll get a hearse."

"There will hardly be time ma'am, will there?"

"Perhaps not," she said, musingly. "When did you say we must be at the door—three o'clock?"

"Three o'clock this afternoon ma'am, so to speak it."

"Very well—you go with it. A pretty waggon is better than an ugly hearse, after all. Joseph, have the new spring waggon with the blue body and red wheels, and wash it very clean. And, Joseph."

"Yes ma'am."

"Carry with you some evergreens and flowers to put upon her coffin—indeed, gather a great many, and completely bury her in them. Get some boughs of laurustinus, and variegated box, and yew, and boy's-love; ay, and some bunches of chrysanthemum. And let old Pleasant draw her, because she knew him so well."

"I will ma'am. I ought to have said that the Union, in the form of four labouring men, will meet me when I gets to our churchyard gate, and take her and bury her according to the rites of the Board of Guardians, as by law ordained."

"Dear me—Casterbridge Union—and is Fanny come to this!" said Bathsheba, musing. "I wish I had known of it sooner. I thought she was far away. How long has she lived there?"

"On'y been there a day or two."

"Oh!—then she has not been staying there as a regular inmate?"

"No. She's been picking up a living at seampstering in Melchester for several months, at the house of a very respectable widow-woman who takes in work of that sort. She only got handy the Union-house on Sunday morning 'a b'lieve, and 'tis supposed here and there that she had traipsed every step of the way from Melchester. Why she left her place I can't say, for I don't know; and as to a lie, why, I wouldn't tell it. That's the short of the story ma'am."

"Ah-h!"

No gem ever flashed from a rosy ray to a white one more rapidly than changed the young wife's countenance whilst this word came from her in a long drawn breath. "Did she walk along our turnpike-road?" she said, in a suddenly restless and eager voice.

"I believe she did . . . Ma'am, shall I call Liddy? You baint well, ma'am, surely? You look like a lily—so pale and fainty!"

"No; don't call her; it is nothing. When did she pass Weatherbury?"

"Last Saturday night."

"That will do, Joseph; now you may go."

"Certainly, ma'am."

"Joseph, come hither a moment. What was the colour of Fanny Robin's hair?"

"Really mistress, now that 'tis put to me so judge-and-jury-like, I can't call to mind, if ye'll believe me."

"Never mind; go on and do what I told you. Stop—well no, go on."

She turned herself away from him, that he might no longer notice the mood which had set its sign so visibly upon her, and went indoors with a distressing sense of faintness and a beating brow. About an hour after she heard the noise of the waggon and went out, still with a painful consciousness of her bewildered and troubled look. Joseph, dressed in his best suit of clothes, was putting in the horse to start. The shrubs and flowers were all piled in the waggon, as she had directed. Bathsheba hardly saw them now.

"Whose sweetheart did you say, Joseph?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Are you quite sure?"

"Yes, ma'am, quite sure."

"Sure of what?"

"I am sure that all I know is that she arrived in the morning and died in the evening without further parley. What Oak and Mr. Boldwood told me was only these few words. 'Little Fanny Robin is dead, Joseph,' Gabriel said, looking in my face in his steady old way. I was very sorry, and I said, 'Ah!—and how did she come to die?' 'Well, she's dead in Casterbridge Union,' he said; 'and perhaps 'tisn't much matter about how she came to die. She reached the Union early Sunday morning, and died in the afternoon—that's clear enough.' Then I asked what she'd been doing lately, and Mr. Boldwood turned round to me then, and left off spitting a thistle with the end of his stick. He told me about her having lived by seampstering in Melchester, as I mentioned to you, and that she walked therefrom at the end of last week, passing near here Saturday night in the dusk. They then said I had better just name a hent of her death to you, and away they went. Her death might have been brought on by biding in the night wind, you know, ma'am; for people used to say she'd go off in a decline: she used to cough a good deal in winter time. However 'tisn't much odds to us about that now, for 'tis all over."

"Have you heard a different story at all?" She looked at him so intently that Joseph's eyes quailed.

"Not a word, mistress, I assure you," he said. "Hardly anybody in the parish knows the news yet."

"I wonder why Gabriel didn't bring the message to me himself. He mostly makes a point of seeing me upon the most trifling errand." These words were merely murmured, and she was looking upon the ground.

"Perhaps he was busy, ma'am," Joseph suggested. "And sometimes he seems to suffer from things upon his mind connected with the time when he was better off than 'a is now. 'A's rather a curious item, but a very understanding shepherd, and learned in books."

"Did anything seem upon his mind whilst he was speaking to you about this?"

"I cannot but say that there did, ma'am. He was terrible down, and so was Farmer Boldwood."

"Thank you, Joseph. That will do. Go on now, or you'll be late."

Bathsheba, still unhappy, went indoors again. In the course of the afternoon she said to Liddy, who had been informed of the occurrence, "What was the colour of poor Fanny Robin's hair? Do you know? I cannot recollect—I only saw her for a day or two."

"It was light, ma'am; but she wore it rather short, and packed away under her cap, so that you would hardly notice it. But I have seen her let it down when she was going to bed, and it looked beautiful then. Real golden hair."

"Her young man was a soldier, was he not?"

"Yes. In the same regiment as Mr. Troy. He says he knew him very well."

"What, Mr. Troy says so? How came he to say that?"

"One day I just named it to him, and asked him if he knew Fanny's young man. He said, 'Oh yes, he knew the young man as well as he knew himself, and that there wasn't a man in the regiment he liked better.'"

"Ah! Said that, did he?"

"Yes, and he said there was a strong likeness between himself and the other young man, so that sometimes people mistook them——"

"Liddy, for Heaven's sake stop your talking!" said Bathsheba, with the nervous petulance that comes from worrying perceptions.

CHAPTER XLII.

JOSEPH AND HIS BURDEN: "BUCK'S HEAD."

A WALL bounded the site of Casterbridge Union-house, except along a portion of the end. Here a high gable stood prominent, and it was covered like the front with a mat of ivy. In this gable was no window, chimney, ornament, or protuberance of any kind. The single feature appertaining to it, beyond the expanse of dark green leaves, was a small door.

The situation of the door was peculiar. The sill was three or four feet above the ground, and for a moment one was at a loss for an explanation of this exceptional altitude, till ruts immediately beneath suggested that the door was used solely for the passage of articles and persons to and from the level of a vehicle standing on the outside. Upon the whole, the door seemed to advertise itself as a species of Traitors' Gate translated to another element. That entry and exit hereby was only at rare intervals became apparent on noting that tufts of grass were allowed to flourish undisturbed in the chinks of the sill.

As the clock from the tower of St. George's Church pointed at three minutes to three, a blue spring waggon, picked out with red, and containing boughs and flowers, turned from the high road and halted on this side of the building. Whilst the chimes were yet stammering out a shattered form of "Malbrook," Joseph Poorgrass rang the bell, and received directions to back his waggon against the high door under the gable. The door then opened, and a plain elm coffin was slowly thrust forth, and laid by two men in fustian along the middle of the vehicle.

One of the men then stepped up beside it, took from his pocket a lump of chalk, and wrote upon the cover the name and a few other words in a large scrawling hand. (We believe that they do these things more tenderly now, and provide a plate.) He covered the whole with a black cloth, threadbare, but decent, the tail-board of the waggon was returned to its place, one of the men handed a certificate of registry to Poorgrass, and both entered the door, closing it behind them. Their connection with her, short as it had been, was over for ever.

Joseph then placed the flowers as enjoined, and the evergreens around the flowers, till it was difficult to divine what the waggon contained; he smacked his whip, and the rather pleasing funeral car crept up the hill, and along the road to Weatherbury.

The afternoon drew on apace, and, looking to the left towards the sea as he walked beside the horse, Poorgrass saw strange clouds and scrolls of mist rolling over the high hills which girt the landscape in that quarter. They came in yet greater volumes, and indolently crept across the intervening valleys, and around the withered papery flags of the sloughs and river brinks. Then their dank spongy forms closed in upon the sky. It was a sudden overgrowth of atmospheric fungi which had their roots in the neighbouring sea, and by the time that horse, man, and corpse entered Yalbury Great Wood, these silent workings of an invisible hand had reached them, and they were completely enveloped. It was the first arrival of the autumn fogs, and the first fog of the series.

The air was as an eye suddenly struck blind. The waggon and its load rolled no longer on the horizontal division between clearness and opacity. They were imbedded in an elastic body of a monotonous pallor throughout. There was no perceptible motion in the air, not a visible drop of water fell upon a leaf of the beeches, birches, and firs composing the wood on either side. The trees stood in an attitude of intentness, as

if they waited longingly for a wind to come and rock them. A startling quiet overhung all surrounding things—so completely, that the crunching of the waggon-wheels was as a great noise, and small rustles, which had never obtained a hearing except by night, were distinctly individualised.

Joseph Poorgrass looked round upon his sad burden as it loomed faintly through the flowering laurustinus, then at the unfathomable gloom amid the high trees on each hand, indistinct, shadowless, and spectre-like in their monochrome of grey. He felt anything but cheerful, and wished he had the company even of a child or dog. Stopping the horse, he listened. Not a footstep or wheel was audible anywhere around, and the dead silence was broken only by a heavy particle falling from a tree through the evergreens and alighting with a smart rap upon the coffin of poor Fanny. The fog had by this time saturated the trees, and this was the first dropping of water from the overbrimming leaves. The hollow echo of its fall reminded the waggoner painfully of the grim Leveller. Then hard by came down another drop, then two or three. Presently there was a continual tapping of these heavy drops upon the dead leaves, the road, and the travellers. The nearer boughs were beaded with the mist to the greyness of aged men, and the rusty-red leaves of the beeches were hung with similar drops, like diamonds on auburn hair.

Situated by the roadside in the midst of this wood was the old inn, called "Buck's Head." It was about a mile and a half from Weatherbury, and in the meridian times of stage-coach travelling had been the place where many coaches changed and kept their relays of horses. All the old stabling was now pulled down, and little remained besides the habitable inn itself, which, standing a little way back from the road, signified its existence to people far up and down the highway by a sign hanging from the horizontal bough of an elm on the opposite side of the way.

Travellers—for the variety *tourist* had hardly developed into a distinct species at this date—sometimes said in passing, when they cast their eyes up to the sign-bearing tree, that artists were fond of representing the sign-board hanging thus, but that they themselves had never before noticed so perfect an instance in actual working order. It was near this tree that the waggon was standing into which Gabriel Oak crept on his first journey to Weatherbury; but, owing to the darkness, the sign and the inn had been unobserved.

The manners of the inn were of the old-established type. Indeed, in the minds of its frequenters they existed as unalterable formulæ: *e.g.*—

Rap with the bottom of your pint for more liquor.

For tobacco, shout.

In calling for the girl in waiting, say, "Maid!"

Ditto for the landlady, "Old Soul!" &c. &c.

It was a relief to Joseph's heart when the friendly sign-board came in view, and, stopping his horse immediately beneath it, he proceeded to fulfil an intention made a long time before. His spirits were oozing out of him

quite. He turned the horse's head to the green bank, and entered the hostel for a mug of ale.

Going down into the kitchen of the inn, the floor of which was a step below the passage, which in its turn was a step below the road outside, what should Joseph see to gladden his eyes but two copper-coloured discs, in the form of the countenances of Mr. Jan Coggan and Mr. Mark Clark. These owners of the two most appreciative throats in the neighbourhood, on this side of respectability, were now sitting face to face over a three-legged circular table, having an iron rim to keep cups and pots from being accidentally elbowed off; they might have been said to resemble the setting sun and the full moon shining *vis-à-vis* across the globe.

"Why, 'tis neighbour Poorgrass!" said Mark Clark. "I'm sure your face don't praise your mistress's table, Joseph."

"I've had a very pale companion for the last five miles," said Joseph, indulging in a shudder toned down by resignation. "And to speak the truth, 'twas beginning to tell upon me. I assure ye I ha'n't seed the colour of victuals or drink since breakfast time this morning, and that was no more than a dew-bit afield."

"Then drink, Joseph, and don't restrain yourself!" said Coggan, handing him a hooped mug three-quarters full.

Joseph drank for a moderately long time, then for a longer time, saying, as he lowered the jug, "'Tis pretty drinking—very pretty drinking, and is more than cheerful on my melancholy errand, so to speak it."

"True, drink is a pleasant delight," said Jan, as one who repeated a truism so familiar to his brain that he hardly noticed its passage over his tongue; and, lifting the cup, Coggan tilted his head gradually backwards, with closed eyes, that his expectant soul might not be diverted for one instant from its bliss by irrelevant surroundings.

"Well, I must be on again," said Poorgrass. "Not but that I should like another nip with ye; but the country might lose confidence in me if I was seed here."

"Where be ye trading o't to to-day then, Joseph?"

"Back to Weatherbury. I've got poor little Fanny Robin in my waggon outside, and I must be at the churchyard gates at a quarter to five with her."

"Ay—I've heard of it. And so she's nailed up in parish boards after all, and nobody to pay the bell shilling and the grave half-crown."

"The parish pays the grave half-crown, but not the bell shilling, because the bell's a luxury: but 'a can hardly do without the grave, poor body. However, I expect our mistress will pay all."

"A pretty maid as ever I see! But what's yer hurry, Joseph? The pore woman's dead, and you can't bring her to life, and you may as well sit down comfortable and finish another with us."

"I don't mind taking just the merest thimbleful of imagination more with ye, sonnies. But only a few minutes, because 'tis as 'tis."

"Of course, you'll have another drop. A man's twice the man after-

wards. You feel so warm and glorious, and you whop and slap at your work without any trouble, and everything goes on like sticks a-breaking. Too much liquor is bad, and leads us to that horned man in the smoky house; but, after all, many people haven't the gift of enjoying a soak, and since we are highly favoured with a power that way, we should make the most o't."

"True," said Mark Clark. "'Tis a talent the Lord has mercifully bestowed upon us, and we ought not to neglect it. But, what with the parsons and clerks and school-people and serious tea-parties, the merry old ways of good life have gone to the dogs—upon my carcase, they have!"

"Well, really, I must be onward again now," said Joseph.

"Now, now, Joseph; nonsense! The poor woman is dead, isn't she, and what's your hurry?"

"Well, I hope Providence won't be in a way with me for my doings," said Joseph, again sitting down. "I've been troubled with weak moments lately, 'tis true. I've been drinky once this month already, and I did not go to church a-Sunday, and I dropped a curse or two yesterday; so I don't want to go too far for my safety. Your next world is your next world, and not to be squandered lightly."

"I believe ye to be a chapel-member, Joseph. That I do."

"Oh, no, no! I don't go so far as that."

"For my part," said Coggan, "I'm staunch Church of England."

"Ay, and faith, so be I," said Mark Clark.

"I won't say much for myself: I don't wish to," Coggan continued, with that tendency to talk on principles which is characteristic of the barley-corn. "But I've never changed a single doctrine: I've stuck like a plaster to the old faith I was born in. Yes, there's this to be said for the Church, a man can belong to the Church and bide in his cheerful old inn, and never trouble or worry his mind about doctrines at all. But to be a meetinger, you must go to chapel in all winds and weathers, and make yerself as frantic as a skit. Not but that chapel-members be clever chaps enough in their way. They can lift up beautiful prayers out of their own heads, all about their families and shipwracks in the newspaper."

"They can—they can," said Mark Clark, with corroborative feeling; "but we Churchmen, you see, must have it all printed aforehand, or, dang it all, we should no more know what to say to a great person like Providence than babes unborn."

"Chapel-folk be more hand-in-glove with them above than we," said Joseph, thoughtfully.

"Yes," said Coggan. "We know very well that if anybody goes to heaven, they will. They've worked hard for it, and they deserve to have it, such as 'tis. I'm not such a fool as to pretend that we who stick to the Church have the same chance as they, because we know we have not. But I hate a feller who'll change his old ancient doctrines for the sake of getting to heaven. I'd as soon turn king's-evidence for the few pounds

you get. Why, neighbours, when every one of my taties were frosted, our Parson Thirdly were the man who gave me a sack for seed, though he hardly had one for his own use, and no money to buy 'em. If it hadn't been for him, I shouldn't hae had a tatie to put in my garden. D'ye think I'd turn after that? No, I'll stick to my side; and if we be in the wrong, so be it: I'll fall with the fallen!"

"Well said—very well said," observed Joseph.—"However, folks, I must be moving now: upon my life I must. Parson Thirdly will be waiting at the church gates, and there's the woman a-biding outside in the waggon."

"Joseph Poorgrass, don't be so miserable! Parson Thirdly won't mind. He's a generous man; he's found me in tracts for years, and I've consumed a good many in the course of a long and rather shady life; but he's never been the man to complain of the expense. Sit down."

The longer Joseph Poorgrass remained, the less was his spirit troubled by the duties which devolved upon him this afternoon. The minutes glided by uncounted, until the evening shades began perceptibly to deepen, and the eyes of the three were but sparkling points on the surface of darkness. Coggan's watch struck six from his pocket in the usual still small tones.

At that moment hasty steps were heard in the entry, and the door opened to admit the figure of Gabriel Oak, followed by the maid of the inn bearing a candle. He stared sternly at the one lengthy and two round faces of the sitters, which confronted him with the expressions of a fiddle and a couple of warming-pans. Joseph Poorgrass blinked, and shrank several inches into the background.

"Upon my soul, I'm ashamed of you; 'tis disgraceful, Joseph, disgraceful!" said Gabriel, indignantly. "Coggan, you call yourself a man, and don't know better than this!"

Coggan looked up indefinitely at Oak, one or other of his eyes occasionally opening and closing of its own accord, as if it were not a member but a dozy individual with a distinct personality.

"Don't take on so, shepherd!" said Mark Clark, looking reproachfully at the candle, which appeared to possess special features of interest for his eyes.

"Nobody can hurt a dead woman," at length said Coggan, with the precision of a machine. "All that could be done for her is done—she's beyond us: and why should a man put himself in a tearing hurry for lifeless clay that can neither feel nor see, and don't know what you do with her at all? If she'd been alive, I would have been the first to help her. If she now wanted victuals and drink, I'd pay for it, money down. But she's dead, and no speed of ours will bring her to life. The woman's past us—time spent upon her is throwed away: why should we hurry to do what's not required? Drink, shepherd, and be friends, for to-morrow we may be like her."

"We may," added Mark Clark, emphatically, at once drinking him-

self, to run no further risk of losing his chance by the event alluded to, Jan meanwhile merging his additional thoughts of to-morrow in a song:—

“To-mor-row, to-mor-row !
And while peace and plenty I find at my board,
With a heart free from sick-ness and sor-row,
With my friends will I share what to-day may af-ford,
And let them spread the ta-ble to-mor-row.
To-mor-row, to-mor——”

“Do hold thy horning, Jan !” said Oak ; and turning upon Poorgrass, “As for you, Joseph, who do your wicked deeds in such con-foundedly holy ways, you are as drunk as you can stand.”

“No, Shepherd Oak, no ! Listen to reason, shepherd. All that’s the matter with me is the affliction called a multiplying eye, and that’s how it is I look double to you—I mean you look double to me.”

“A multiplying eye is a very distressing thing,” said Mark Clark.

“It always comes on when I have been in a public-house a little time,” said Joseph Poorgrass, meekly. “Yes, I see two of every sort, as if I were some holy man living in the times of King Noah and entering into the ark. . . . Y-y-y-yes,” he added, becoming much affected by the picture of himself as a person thrown away, and shedding tears, “I feel too good for England : I ought to have lived in Genesis by rights, like the other men of sacrifice, and then I shouldn’t have b-b-been called a d-d-drunkard in such a way !”

“I wish you’d show yourself a man of spirit, and not sit whining there !”

“Show myself a man of spirit ? . . . Ah, well ! let me take the name of drunkard humbly—let me be a man of contrite knees—let it be ! I know that I always do say ‘Please God’ afore I do anything, from my getting up to my going down of the same, and I am willing to take as much disgrace as belongs to that holy act. Hah, yes ! . . . But not a man of spirit ? Have I ever allowed the toe of pride to be lifted against my person without shouting manfully that I question the right to do so ? I enquire that query boldly !”

“We can’t say that you have, Joseph Poorgrass,” said Jan, emphatically.

“Never have I allowed such treatment to pass unquestioned ! Yet the shepherd says in the face of that rich testimony that I am not a man of spirit ! Well, let it pass by, and death is a kind friend.”

Gabriel, seeing that neither of the three was in a fit state to take charge of the waggon for the remainder of the journey, made no reply, but, closing the door again upon them, went across to where the vehicle stood, now getting indistinct in the fog and gloom of this mildewy time. He pulled the horse’s head from the large patch of turf it had eaten bare, readjusted the boughs over the coffin, and drove along through the un-wholesome night.

It had gradually become rumoured in the village that the body to be brought and buried that day was all that was left of the unfortunate Fanny Robin who had followed the Eleventh from Casterbridge to Melchester. But, thanks to Boldwood's reticence and Oak's generosity, the lover she had followed had never been individualised as Troy. Gabriel hoped that the whole truth of the matter might not be published till at any rate the girl had been in her grave for a few days, when the interposing barriers of earth and time, and a sense that the events had been somewhat shut into oblivion, would deaden the sting that revelation and invidious remark would have for Bathsheba just now.

By the time that Gabriel reached the old manor-house, her residence, which lay in his way to the church, it was quite dark. A man came from the gate and said through the fog, which hung between them like blown flour,

"Is that Poorgrass with the corpse?"

Gabriel recognised the voice as that of the parson.

"The corpse is here, sir," said Gabriel.

"I have just been to inquire of Mrs. Troy if she could tell me the reason of the delay. I am afraid it is too late now for the funeral to be performed with proper decency. Have you the registrar's certificate?"

"No," said Gabriel. "I expect Poorgrass has that; and he's at the 'Buck's Head.' I forgot to ask him for it."

"Then that settles the matter. We'll put off the funeral till to-morrow morning. The body may be brought on to the church, or it may be left here at the farm and fetched by the bearers in the morning. They waited more than an hour, and have now gone home."

Gabriel had his reasons for thinking the latter a most objectionable plan, notwithstanding that Fanny had been an inmate of the farm-house for several years in the lifetime of Bathsheba's uncle. Visions of several unhappy contingencies which might arise from this delay flitted before him. But his will was not law, and he went indoors to enquire of his mistress what were her wishes on the subject. He found her in an unusual mood: her eyes as she looked up to him were suspicious and perplexed as with some antecedent thought. Troy had not yet returned. At first Bathsheba assented with a mien of indifference to his proposition that they should go on to the church at once with their burden; but immediately afterwards, following Gabriel to the gate, she swerved to the extreme of solicitousness on Fanny's account, and desired that the girl might be brought into the house. Oak argued upon the convenience of leaving her in the waggon, just as she lay now, with her flowers and green leaves about her, merely wheeling the vehicle into the coach-house till the morning, but to no purpose. "It is unkind and unchristian," she said, "to leave the poor thing in a coach-house all night."

"Very well, then," said the parson. "And I will arrange that the funeral shall take place early to-morrow. Perhaps Mrs. Troy is right in feeling that we cannot treat a dead fellow-creature too thoughtfully. We

must remember that though she may have erred grievously in leaving her home, she is still our sister; and it is to be believed that God's uncovenanted mercies are extended towards her, and that she is a member of the flock of Christ."

The parson's words spread into the heavy air with a sad yet unperturbed cadence, and Gabriel shed an honest tear. Bathsheba seemed unmoved. Mr. Thirdly then left them, and Gabriel lighted a lantern. Fetching three other men to assist him, they bore the unconscious truant indoors, placing the coffin on two benches in the middle of a little sitting-room next the hall, as Bathsheba directed.

Every one except Gabriel Oak then left the room. He still indecisively lingered beside the body. He was deeply troubled at the wretchedly ironical aspect that circumstances were putting on with regard to Troy's wife, and at his own powerlessness to counteract them. In spite of his careful manœuvring all this day, the very worst event that could in any way have happened in connection with the burial had happened now. Oak imagined a terrible discovery resulting from this afternoon's work that might cast over Bathsheba's life a shade which the interposition of many lapsing years might but indifferently lighten, and which nothing at all might altogether remove.

Suddenly, as in a last attempt to save Bathsheba from, at any rate, immediate anguish, he looked again, as he had looked before, at the chalk writing upon the coffin-lid. The scrawl was this simple one, "*Fanny Robin and child.*" Gabriel took his handkerchief and carefully rubbed out the two latter words. He then left the room, and went out quietly by the front door.

Maids-of-all-Work and Blue Books.

I.

Farewell rewards and fairies,
 Good housewives now may say,
 For now foule sluts in dairies
 Doe fare as well as they ;
 And tho' they sweepe their hearths no less
 Than maydes were wont to do,
 Yet who of late for cleanliness
 Finds sixpence in her shoe ?

We have all heard of a benevolent race of little pixies who live underground in subterranean passages and galleries. While people are asleep in their beds these friendly little creatures will come up from their homes in the depths of the earth and dust, and sort and put our houses in order, and repair the damages and waste of the day, light the fires, fill the cans, milk the cows. There is no end to their good offices. They reject all thanks, and are apt to disappear and give warning upon small provocation. Sir Walter Scott has written their history, and as one reads one might sometimes almost fancy that an allegory is being told of some little servant-maid of modern times—I do not mean the comfortable, respectable upper house and parlour-maid of villa and crescent-life, but of the little struggling maid-of-all-work dwelling under our feet or in the narrow passages and defiles of our great city. Do they when their work is finished sometimes immerse from their subterranean haunts, sit by flowing streams, float along upon lily leaves, or sport in moonlit fields, dancing in circles? I am afraid no such pleasant recreation is reserved for our poor little household drudges.

Most people who have ever rung bells, found their hot water ready set for their use, their breakfast waiting their convenience, will be interested in a Report recently laid before the House of Commons—the Blue Book which concerns these little maids.

It is written in the simplest way. Its rhetoric is made up of a few dates and numbers. Its phrases represent so much work done rather than words strung together. It has sentiment enough in its pages, and pathos and tragedy. They are classed *a*, *b*, and *c* for convenience. This remorseless record of life as it exists for a certain number of people is tabulated for easy reference; so are the sorrows and indifferences of which it treats in a few quiet words. The history of these 650 girls will be found in an appendix, says one sentence. No wonder that reviewers hesitate to pronounce upon such a literature.

"In January, 1873, you told me," says Mrs. Senior, "that you wished to have a woman's view as to the effect on girls of the System of Education at Pauper Schools. You asked me if I would undertake to visit the workhouse schools and report to you the conclusions at which I arrived. . . .

"I have given my attention almost exclusively to questions affecting the physical, moral, and domestic training at the schools. I have not attempted to judge of the scholastic work, as I required all the time allowed me for looking into the matters on which I knew that you more especially desired the judgment of a woman. I divided the enquiry into two parts :

- "1. As to the present working of the system in schools.
- "2. As to the after career of girls who have been placed out in the world."

This first part means many months of ceaseless investigation into metropolitan schools, country schools, orphanages, reformatories, &c.; the boarding-out system, as carried out in Cumberland and the North, &c.

The second division represents no less labour of a different kind.

"My next endeavour was to ascertain the history of the girls who had been placed in service from the schools during the last two years. I obtained the names and addresses, more or less exact, of about 650 girls who had been placed out in service in the years 1871-2 in all parts of London and its suburbs, and the history of each girl, as derived from the books or otherwise, was sought to be verified by personal investigation. The very great number of visits to be made, and enquiries to be set on foot, involved in this first investigation, could not within the time allowed be undertaken by myself personally, but the work was effectually carried out by the help of several indefatigable friends.

"I enquired myself personally into the cases of fifty of these girls," says Mrs. Senior, who has not been content with merely writing a report. She has lived it, heard it speak, gone straight to the human beings concerned in her Tables. Her own personal investigations are contained in Appendix G; in Appendix F are the histories investigated by her assistants.

"In order to ascertain the school history of each child," she continues, "I have usually found it necessary to consult, besides admission and discharge books, five enormous alphabetical registers, numerous volumes of relief lists, creed registers, service register, and chaplain's visiting books."

This is but a small part of the labour to be undertaken in writing a report of which every detail almost is a living figure in the great and terrible sum which is set before us all to work out as best we can, not only in Blue Books and pamphlets. Anybody may supply a running commentary upon the text, by looking about and using that useful power of common sense with which we are more or less gifted. The facts and data are not past things and distant conclusions—they are now, and round

about us. The children are there, the schools are there, the maid-servants are in the kitchens, the report is published, and anyone may read it who chooses.

II.

We should be indeed ungrateful to the work of those wise and far-seeing people who first turned their attention to the crying evils which existed in workhouse schools, and who first insisted upon separate schools for the children, if we did not begin by acknowledging that whatever is done now, and whatever further improvement may be found possible, theirs was the first and decisive step in the abolition of a great abuse. The workhouses are necessarily refuges for every species of failure in life, in conduct, in mind, in body. Such depressing and contaminating influence is the very last to which young children should ever be subjected. States of mind are as catching, especially at an early age, as some states of body. To see people who have neglected their opportunities, deserted their duties, succumbed to every sort of temptation, provided for by the state in a sort of semi-Hades of apathetic discontent, must certainly have no good effect upon the younger generation, already inheriting, perhaps, many of the proclivities that have brought this dismal fate upon their seniors.

The children, seeing their father a willing prisoner in fustian, their mother plodding doggedly along the ward in her blue-striped livery, come to look upon this unsatisfying place as a future to look to. Apathy seems to them a natural condition, low talk and common ways will be familiar sounds, they insensibly imbibe the fetid influence of the condition to which all these people have been brought; by misfortune was it?—or by wrong-doing?—who shall say, or whose the wrong-doing that has doomed these poor souls.

“The atmosphere of a workhouse that contains adult paupers is tainted with vice,” says Mr. Tufnell, in his Report on the training of pauper children. “No one who regards the future happiness of the children would ever wish them to be educated within its precincts.”

A matron of thirty years' experience to whom I once spoke, shook her head and said that she found it practically impossible to prevent ill effects from the contact of children and adults in the workhouse under her care.

Miss Cobbe says, speaking of the state of workhouses so lately as 1861—“Whatever may be our judgment of the treatment of the male able-bodied paupers, very decidedly condemnatory must be our conclusion as regards the management of female adults, for whom it may be said that a residence in the workhouse is commonly moral ruin. The last rags and shreds of modesty which the poor creature may have brought in from the outer world, are ruthlessly torn away by the hideous gossip over the labour of oakum picking, or in the idle lounging about the women's yard.” And in a note we read—“In one metropolitan union it was found on

enquiry, that of 80 girls who had left the workhouse and gone to service, not one had continued in a respectable condition of life."*

The commissioners appointed to enquire into the system felt that nothing but evil could come to the children if things were allowed to continue in the state in which they found them. They worked with unintermitting energy and decision, and it was at their suggestion that separate and district schools were first instituted; separate schools being schools attached to one workhouse only, and built at a distance from the house; district schools being peopled by the children from three or four different workhouses, all brought together for greater convenience in teaching and organising.

Great sums of money have been spent. Fine buildings have been erected. Hundreds and hundreds of little paupers are now being struck off, taught, drilled, and educated by good teachers, with careful superintendents, in large houses, costing large sums of money. There can be no comparison between the present and the past, and there is not one of these children that does not owe gratitude to those who first laboured to deliver them from the house of bondage to which they seemed condemned. But it does not follow that because money has been spent, no further improvement is possible; and because some people have been wise and devoted, that no further good is to be done.

It seems as if every fact and theory of life had to be rediscovered by each of us practitioners of life in turn. We read about things, see them happen, listen to advice, give it more or less intelligently; but we each have to find out for ourselves what relations such things bear to ourselves—what is human in all this printers' ink, which of the figures come to life in our own case, instead of being units or statistics—which among our fellow-creatures are actually living persons for us; duties and claims, wants, necessities, possibilities.

The writer happened to come across a living statistic on the side of good and hopeful things, a bright-faced little creature in a Sunday bonnet, who gave her some account of her experience in her first place. She had been brought up in a separate school and had gone out about thirteen.

"Oh, I've been a servant for years!" said the little thing, who was ready enough to tell us all about herself. "I learnt ironing off the lady; I didn't know nothing about it. I didn't know nothing about anything. I didn't know where to buy the wood for the fire," exploding with laughter at the idea. "I run along the street and asked the first person I saw where the wood-shop was. I was frightened—oh, I was. They wasn't particular kind in my first place. I had plenty to eat—it wasn't anything of that. They jest give me an egg, and they says, 'There, get your dinner,' but not anything more. I had to do all the work. I'd no one to go to: oh! I cried the first night. I used to cry so," exploding again with laughter. "I had always slept in a ward full of other girls, and there I was all alone, and this was a great big house—oh, so big! and they told me to go down stairs, in

* This statement applies to twelve years ago.

a room by the kitchen all alone, with a long black passage. I might have screamed, but nobody would have heard. An archytec the gen'lman was. I got to break everything, I was so frightened; things tumbled down I shook so, and they sent me back to Mrs. —, at the schools. They said I was no good, as I broke everything; and so I did—oh, I was frightened! . . . Then I got a place in a family where there was nine children. I was about fourteen then. I earned two shillings a week. I used to get up and light the fire, bath them and dress them, and git their breakfasts, and the lady sometimes would go up to London on business, and then I had the baby too, and it couldn't be left, and had to be fed. I'd take them all out for a walk on the common. There was one a cripple. She couldn't walk about. She was about nine year old. I used to carry her on my back. Then there was dinner, and to wash up after; and then by that time it would be tea-time agin. And then I had to put the nine children to bed and bath them, and clean up the rooms and the fires at night; there was no time in the morning. And then there would be the gen'lman's supper to get. Oh! that was a hard place. I wasn't in bed till twelve, and I'd be up by six. I stopped there nine months. I hadn't no one to help me. Oh, yes, I had; the baker, he told me of another place. I've been there three year. I'm cook, and they are very kind; but I tell the girls there's none 'on 'em had such work as me. I'm very fond of reading; but I 'aint no time for reading." . . .

She was a neat, bright, clever, stumpy little thing, with a sweet sort of merry voice.

"You would think Susy a giant if you could see some of them; you have no notion what little creatures they all are," said Mrs. —, when I made some remarks about the child's size—and almost immediately came another visitor, smaller, shorter, paler than the first. This little maid had come to talk over the chances of a friend, to whom she seemed much attached.

"There is one thing about her," said this mite, with some dignity; "she don't come up to my shoulder. It's against her getting a good place."

This little woman had been single-handed in a school where there were 50 pupils to let in twice a-day, as well as two sets of lodgers to attend to. The owners of the house were very kind, but too busy themselves to help, and the poor pixie had struggled until her health had broken down. Her feet were swelled; she could no longer hold out when Mrs. — found her. It is a terrific battle if one comes to think of it. One little soldier single-handed against a house and its wants, and the dust and the smuts, and the food and the inmates, and the bells, and the beds, and the fire and water to be served up in cans and stoves and plates. Atlas could carry the world on his shoulder, but what was his task compared to poor little Betty's?

III.

The writer has a friend among District Schools, who has more than once admitted her into the wards under his direction. At the time when he and his wife were appointed to their present position, the schools were in a bad and unsatisfactory state; notwithstanding all advantage of situation and arrangement, and liberal support, the health of the school-children was not what it should have been! Regularity, economy, uniformity—all these things seem desirable enough; but there is a point where we must all acknowledge that such things are intended for men's use, and not for their constraint alone, and my friends have made it their business to find out where that point exists.

Mrs. Senior suggests, among other things, some sort of home life in the schools: wards broken up, if possible, into divisions, which might rectify their weary uniformity—some system of home government; the nurse, perhaps, acting as mother, and the elder girls attending to the little ones and babies. "The children want *mothering*," says the Blue Book, in the natural tones of a woman's voice.

About some necessities there can be but one opinion—air, water, room, change, well-cooked food, ease, backs to the forms—all these things our Blue Book recommends, not in official language, but in a voice that speaks far more truly the real feeling which is now abroad. Judging from signs we see daily (perhaps even more among the rulers than among the ruled), the great age of red tape seems coming to a close. The good goddess Hygeia must be smiling as she sees her temples rising, her votaries assembling, singing her praises in public and in private, and worshipping her with many ablutions and ceremonies of mighty import!

My friends, Mr. and Mrs. —, who have partially tried one of Mrs. Senior's plans in the establishment under their direction, say that their experiment has had a most excellent result. They began of their own accord by creating a nursery hour, without any idea of the good effects which were to follow, but they very soon found that the girls allowed to attend to the children delighted in the work, softened to the little ones, and the children themselves got on better than when they were lost in the great body of the house. The nursery is detached from the main building, and when we walked in, it was broad daylight—eight o'clock—June bed-time. The little paupers were going to bed in the great bright wards. All the windows were open; the children were taking off their blue stockings and heavy little boots. We met one three-year-old pattering adventurously down a passage, and carrying its shift in its hand. There were about a dozen little creatures in one room, where an elder girl was undressing them. They could take off their thick boots for themselves; one ambitious Jenny was tugging at a string with a serious flushed face; a friend about her own size was looking on with deep interest. We said "Good-night" to Jenny, who was too much absorbed to respond, but the little friend stuffed her hand into mine. It was a pretty sight in the next

room to come upon all the babies toddling round their tub and plashing the water with their hands. They were plump, comfortable little bodies, waiting their turn to be scrubbed, and they certainly did credit to kind Mrs. —'s efforts for their comfort.

I don't think they spoke, these small nymphs in blue stockings and unbleached calico; they looked up at us with sweet, innocent faces; one said "Coo-bye;" one laughed and showed us her bed behind the door; another, a little baby boy, toddled forward half naked from the group—he was the youngest, and accustomed to be noticed; and so the kindly waters of the tub—that tepid evening stream that floats so many babes, that sparkles to so many little plashing hands—came flowing with its kind, refreshing depths into the workhouse nursery. The setting sun was shining through the tall open windows, and soft June breaths were blowing in.

For many years all these windows had been carefully filled in, the master told us; but now at last they have removed the ground glass, and let in the sight of the green, and the sunset and the summer-time. In the schoolroom especially the difference was very noticeable.

It was a Sunday evening, and while I was talking to Mrs. — I had heard a distant sort of hymn in the air. The girls were singing as we came into the great schoolroom, about fifty girls were sitting upon the benches, and a music-master was at a harmonium playing and beating time.

They sang very sweetly, with very shrill and touching voices, one little class apart chaunted the hymn, and the others joined in. It was something about soldiers of the cross, with a sort of chorus.

As I stood by the superintendent he pointed to the window, through which we could see a dazzle of June and green and distant hills, and a great field, across which a long procession of these young soldiers went winding and rewinding in the sweet basking evening. One thought of the battle before them—all the hard work, the troubles, and friendlessness of their poor little lives. They were not abashed, and chaunted on with all the might of their young throats, an unconscious prayer for safety, for help, for courage, and defence. While the hymn lasts they are safe enough. Then one day it breaks off for each of them. "At sixteen," says the Board, they are free, and the little soldiers struggle off to meet the world. They can cater for themselves; come, go, loiter as they will; they have had experience enough, advice enough; or, for a change, there is the workhouse, where they will find a new teaching, and a new code of morality.

IV.

Perhaps to the general reader it may not be the details, or the classifications, or the results of the enquiries contained in this Blue Book, that will seem most interesting, but the feeling which is unconsciously shown by its very statistics—the unaffected goodness of heart and womanly mothership for all that is young, childish, foolish, and suffering. No one

can deny facts and the inevitable fatality of causes, of which the effects are, in this instance, the little stunted beings that crowd our schools and educational establishments. But such Reports as these do at least suggest a sort of law leading both to good and to evil—a fatality of good as well as of wrong doing—and make one believe that the genuine interest which some people are feeling, and which has already shown itself in such satisfactory and practical details, may reach many a poor child, by signs more and more comfortable, and tangible, and cheerful.

Where a book ends and the reader begins is as hard to determine as any other of those objective and subjective problems which are sometimes set. Here, as we read, the paragraphs turn into every day ; into the writer, into the children, into one's own conscience, into other people's—into work, trouble, necessity, into the influences by which people affect one another. Books teach us to think ; then comes action to interpret thinking into signs and ceremonies ; then come human beings who enact the signs, who are our consciences, revealed, perhaps, our thoughts, responsive, who are in themselves hope fulfilled, who combine in some strange way all the moods, questions, facts, that we see tangibly spread out before us. It is almost as if one could look round at times and see the whole secret history of conscience mapped out in actual things, and doings ; some of them stupid, jealous, shamefully incomplete ; others gentle, and generous, and effective.

Two facts Mrs. Senior wishes us to bear in mind, if we try to draw some conclusion from that view of life which her report presents to us. One is, that the schools have to deal with bad material. The poor little heroines of this epic are stunted, stupid, unresponsive for the most part, though some people may well ask, Why should they be clever ? How can they grow tall ? and What is it that they have to receive ? They come to the schools because there is no home in the world outside for them, because their parents have come to grief, or to trouble of some sort. They have to go out into the world again with their unsatisfactory little bodies and minds, because the schools can keep them no longer, at an age when other more fortunate children are shielded and loved and cared for, to struggle for themselves with difficulties, mistresses, incapacities, and dangers of every description. So much for the second division of Mrs. Senior's report. As regards that which applies to the changes she would wish to see in the schools, she says these apply to the system itself, and not to the working of it. She says, "I believe that, as a class, there are few people so painstaking, kindhearted, and indefatigable, as the present lot of officials connected with pauper and district schools." It is, perhaps, because of this that, for some years past, some of these officials and managers have been dissatisfied with the results of their hard and constant work—of all this money and trouble given. In district schools, as elsewhere, experience had to be paid for ; and when such vast numbers are collected together, every trifling experiment must necessarily count a thousand-fold, and be multiplied again and again. The evil is gigantic, and almost impossible to grapple with.

V.

At present, one great difficulty consists in the classification of the children to be provided for. There are the orphans, whose only home is the parish and the school; the deserted children, whose parents may reappear to claim them, as well as those whose parents are incapacitated temporarily or otherwise; and there are, thirdly, the casuals, who are sometimes taken in and out by their parents as often as *eight times* in a year, and for whom, under existing circumstances, any legislation must be very indefinite.

The real body of the school consists of the children who have no other home to turn to, and no personal ties to lean upon, and whose welfare, as Mrs. Senior says, should, in any doubtful question, be made the main consideration.

Some masters say that, were the classes divided, and the good influence of the permanent scholars removed from the casuals, these poor little creatures would become so demoralised that they would not have a chance for improvement. Speaking in a general way, Mrs. Senior says that in large schools the officers hold that more good than harm is done by mixing the children; while the officers in smaller schools (who have perhaps better means of judging of individual cases) hold the contrary.

She goes on to say—"The difficulties of managing the pauper schools, even under the present system, are so great that one can heartily sympathise with the dread expressed by some officers of a change which, it appears to them, would add to their difficulties. We are none the less bound, however, to look simply at the question whether the presence of the casual children does or does not cause any moral deterioration to the permanent children, whose interests are chiefly at stake."

Here is a picture of the state of things that might occur, with every careful endeavour for right doing. "To the eye of the visitor the outward order of the schools is in most respects perfect, and it seems generally agreed that the presence of a mass of children already drilled into order has the best effect on new comers. We cannot, however, judge by external order of the real effect of the presence of the casuals. Whatever evil they may have learnt during their vagrant life, they know that it is for their interest to submit to discipline while at school, to conceal what could bring them into discredit with their superiors, and to avoid conduct and language that would entail punishment. Whatever discipline may exist in the school, the children in the playground and dormitories are under little supervision."

"In one school I saw a child of six years old whose language was so horrible that the matron was obliged to send her, as soon as lessons were over, to one of the dormitories in order to get her away from the other children. She was probably too young to know that it was to her interest to hold her tongue in the presence of officers. In a few years she would be more cunning, and keep her bad language for the playground and

dormitories. Another matron told me of a family of sisters who used to go in and out and return each time more and more versed in sin. From another I heard, among many examples, of a family of children who were constantly on the tramp, sleeping like animals in sheds, wandering about the country; children who were at first good and tractable, but who returned each time with more and more knowledge of evil."

"Among many officers I found one who spoke even more strongly than the rest, and whose opinion I consider of great value. She fully recognised the large amount of mischief which can be done in a school even by one child, and felt that the *least* important duty of a mistress is the supervision of children during school hours."

Many of the changes Mrs. Senior recommends are simple, feasible, and will apply to our own children in our own homes as well as to those in this strange cosmopolitan refuge which the necessity of the times has imposed upon our citizens.

If our children have round shoulders, shorn heads, weak eyes—if a certain number of them seem dull, stupid, and incapable of the common duties of life—if their nurses and teachers complain of their bad temper, untruthfulness, apathy, we must feel that for these special children, much as we have done already, we have not yet done enough.

Suppose they are ill, with long and chronic ailments, if we leave them for hours and hours unoccupied in a bare room learning a habit of idleness and apathy only too easy to acquire, and sometimes impossible to forget, we must feel that in one sense only we are doing our duty. You cannot inculcate moral qualities by word of command; intelligence, self-reliance, trust, sympathy—these things can't be dealt out in copy-books or written upon a slate.

Teachers and managers of schools have themselves raised the standard of that which is expected; and as the standard is raised, there will be less and less machinery, and more and more of natural feeling introduced, if it pleases Heaven to give us more wisdom and knowledge of the laws which govern life and human beings; from members of the Cabinet to little pauper children.

A wise and experienced person writes:—

"We teach them indeed to read and write, and read and sing hymns. All that part of their education is probably quite as good as what is given in the day-schools of the ordinary poor. Also we teach them that part of religion which may be conveyed in the form of question and answer. But it is only the sum of all that makes human nature, more emphatically woman's nature, beautiful, useful, or happy. Her moral being is left wholly uncultivated. She possesses nothing of her own, not even her clothes or the hair on her head. How is she to go out inspired with respect for the rights of property, and accustomed to control the natural impulses of childish covetousness? Worse than all, the human affections of the girl are all checked, and with them, almost inevitably, those religious ones which naturally rise through the earthly parents' love to the

Father in Heaven. The workhouse girl is the child of an institution. She is driven about with the rest of the flock, from dormitory to school-room, and from schoolroom to workhouse yard, not harshly or unkindly, but always as one of a herd, whether well or ill cared for. She is nobody's Mary or Kate, to be individually thought of."

VI.

Having gone carefully into the details of the management of these schools, Mrs. Senior, as I have said, proceeded to follow up the results of this management; and her figures, as compared to those in the note of Miss Cobbe's article (where of 80 girls 80 were to be reckoned in the lowest category), are less discouraging than they might seem at a first glance.

"Following out the scheme already stated, we took some trouble to trace out the careers of the girls brought up in the great amalgamated schools and in the separate schools, and, with the help of some experienced persons, to compare them together and divide them into classes; the result was as follows:—

	Girls brought up in District Schools.	Girls brought up in Separate Schools.
Good	28	51
Fair	64	82
Unsatisfactory . .	106	78
Bad	47	35
	<hr/> 245	<hr/> 246

Some idea may be formed of the difficulty and trouble which these few numbers have given to those who compiled them, and who have tried to add up this sum in human nature, by a glance at the Appendix, where will be found a history of each one of these cases traced out from records in school books, to the endless streets, suburban roads, lines of brick and rail, and humanity along which these little entries drift to their fate. The girls themselves have been produced from their back kitchens, and the mistresses encountered in their parlours. Out of complaints and cross-complaints, and good sense and moderate judgment, the daily story becomes a figure again counting in its place.

It is not long ago since I heard some one (with a right than which there is none greater) speaking of the force of contained power and of simple statement as compared to that of vehemence and picturesqueness of language. Here, in the Appendix of Mrs. Senior's Report, are histories, of which I have selected two or three at random. They are not very eventful, and their force most assuredly consists in this power of facts, tending towards the same results; uneventful units, whose histories count in the great sum just as surely as those of the others for whom they rub and scrub and toil.

I might multiply examples, but they are but repetitions of one another

and all in the same way seem to point more or less to two necessities—that of some greater individuality of training when in the schools, and of more complete system of supervision when the school has become daily life.

Here is poor C. D., whose career, as it is traced from book to book, seems typical enough. She is clever, with "high" notions, and goes to service; and then she loses her places again and again, reappears in one book and another, "admission, dismissal, readmission." Here she is under the heading of "distress from service," sent to a home; then follow six admissions, six discharges; lastly, she goes to Highgate Infirmary, and there comes the last entry, "Died June 22, 1871, of phthisis, aged eighteen."

There are naughty girls, and a certain number of good ones, in the lists published by Mrs. Senior.

G. goes from place to place, has fainting fits, hates going to her aunt between places, as relations don't like being at expense. First place—too hard, not in bed till past twelve sometimes. J. M. S., one eye, half witted, no friends, twenty years of age. J. T., deserted child, no friends, whitlow, round shoulder.

As specimens of the class which may well be termed unsatisfactory, come—

No. 1. Pilferer, untruthful, idle, incorrigibly dirty.

No. 2. Very dishonest, dirty. Mistress, a kind person, keeps her because she cannot give her a character.

No. 4. Being refused leave to go out, howls till a crowd is collected.

No. 5. Improving, but throws herself on the ground when people attempt to teach her.

No. 12. Clean, destructive, curiously apathetic.

No. 20. Very bad temper, unkind to children, dishonest, untruthful, dirty. Two mistresses give an equally bad account.

Finally come the girls who have absconded with or without valuables, who are known to be leading immoral lives.

By 15 Vict. cap. ii. sec. 3 & 4, the guardians are required, so long as the servant is under sixteen, and resides within five miles of the work-house, to visit the person at least twice in every year, and report in writing if the person is subjected to cruel treatment in any respect.

At some of the schools the chaplains keep up with the girls in their places after the official hour has struck for them. But when one remembers the average length of a man's life, and the number of girls that pass through the schools, it will be seen how impossible a task this must be for any single person to accomplish thoroughly.

"We have found," says the Report, "many really admirable mistresses, homely women, taking a maternal interest in the girls; sparing no pains to teach and inspect personally the work of the house, and who understood that the little servant needed some pleasure and relaxation. Without any parade we have often heard from a mistress of a shilling

given now and then to the girl to be spent in her own pleasure, of little presents to her subscribed for by the children." But at the same time the statistics show how many there are among them who disappear entirely, and in the case of workhouse girls we know too well what this disappearance means.

A friend of Mrs. Senior, writing to her, says :—

"The answers given to me by the mistresses of girls sent to service from the metropolitan pauper schools were so uniform in character, that I think the system of training must be in a great measure answerable for characteristics so general and so strongly marked. I have made enquiries as to 40 girls.

"The girls were all without exception well taught in reading and writing; in arithmetic, as far as I could ascertain, they were fairly competent.

"All without exception were well taught in needlework, as regards the mere execution of stitches; and *all with one exception were unable to arrange or do any sort of needlework without constant supervision.**

"All without exception are well taught in the element of religious knowledge.

"All without exception are curiously apathetic in temperament, described to me as not caring for anything, taking no interest, not enjoying, seeming like old people. All with one exception were stunted in growth and physical development, even where the health was good.

"If we compare the girls in pauper schools with girls kept at home by family necessity, or sent to service at fourteen or fifteen, I think we shall find the following differences :—The house girls have infinitely more life and energy, and it is much easier to teach them their work. They are often very troublesome to learn at first, but at least half of them are fairly good tempered; those with defective tempers are seldom invincibly stubborn or outrageous, and there is no difference between their physical development and that of all other classes."

A matron of a workhouse said to me the other day—"I knew a nice, good girl who was dismissed then and there by her mistress for what do you think, ma'am? for falling asleep in the day-time. I say it is not natural for a girl of sixteen to go fast asleep in the day-time, unless she is tired out and can't keep up any longer."

"People turn them off and let them go, without a thought," she continued. "I myself met a poor child wandering about in the street, not knowing where to turn. I took her home, and she is now my servant; but there is no knowing where she might be if I hadn't chanced to meet her."

Three girls, who were just going out to service from a district school, came into the superintendent's parlour the other day while I happened to be there; they were girls of sixteen, but they looked scarcely thirteen in

* This seems an excellent illustration of the defect of too much system in education.

their crops and pinafores. One of them appeared utterly stupid, and seemed to stare at my questions instead of answering them. The second was silent but intelligent, with wondering blue eyes and a very sweet expression. The third girl talked a good deal, but only by rote; she had been out already, but had been sent back by her mistress, she said. When I asked her what she had done in her place, she wandered off into some housemaid's catechism.

"What did you think about, the first morning when you awoke?" said Mrs. —.

"I couldn't think where I was," said the girl; "it was so small all round, with paper on the walls."

"And what happened next?" said Mrs. —.

Here the little housemaid started off rapidly. "Rise at 'alf-past five, throw open the window, light the kitching fire, then do the parlour, carefully turning down the 'earth-rug for fear it should be spiled, then sweep and dust the sitting-room, scattering tea-leaves," &c.

Perhaps the little thing's practice had not been equal to her precept; happily for herself she was still of an age to be received into the school and into her pinafore again. If she breaks down a second time she will only have the workhouse for a refuge; and what a workhouse is for young and impressionable girls, every guardian, every master, every matron will tell you.* Any Blue Books I have ever read, any inspectors I have ever spoken to, agree upon this subject.

* Appendix A is one bright gleam of hope into a somewhat sombre picture, and gives a delightful impression of children sent away from their discipline, growing and brightening, and running about in a sort of earthly paradise, with Miss Preusser as Lady President upon earth.

A migration from Bethnal-green to Burnside, Ambleside, Troutbeck, and Grassmere, must in itself be a change for the better. In these districts it has become a custom, established by the efforts of certain ladies living in the neighbourhood, to receive the children into the cottages, not exactly for money, for the money allowed only just defrays the children's expenses. They arrive weakly in body, dull, and vacant, but they soon begin to revive. Miss Preusser told Mrs. Senior that one little girl increased 16 lbs. in weight in the first year after her arrival from London. "I constantly saw little girls taking care of young children and babies," says Mrs. Senior, "or engaged in some bit of house-work. My impression is that in no case had they been taken in exclusively for the sake of payment. The people were all earning good wages, seemed doing comfortably, and not to be in need of this source of income."

Mrs. Senior then went on to Edinburgh. "I found twenty-two of these children in villages about six miles out of Edinburgh, in the families of miners and labourers. The houses are clean, most of them remarkably so, and the foster-mothers turned down their beds with great pride.

"At Ellsrickle, high among the hills, I saw twenty-four children all boarded out in the families of crofters. In several cases the head of the family, besides cultivating his few acres of land, has a loom at which he works at odd hours. The houses are ideals of comfort and thrift. Most families have a cow—some even two—and a good garden, besides a few acres of farm. Out of school-hours the children work on the farm, in the garden, and help their foster-parents.

I have been told in one district school that the most troublesome and unmanageable girls are those who have, by the desire of the guardians, passed through a workhouse, and remained there for some time before being despatched to the school.

VII.

Women are, perhaps, naturally more suspicious and nervously impressionable than men, and for this very reason are better able to observe those details which so greatly concern little children and young girls. Surely it is a wise and far-seeing legislature that allows for this difference; that attempts to suit the intelligence at its command to the work to be accomplished.

Here we find a woman doing woman's work, patiently following out detail after detail, minutely inspecting wards, and clothes, and apparatus of every kind, reporting conscientiously, and bringing forward her long year's work. It is for other minds to generalise and legislate again upon this work, which seems to have been honestly carried out, and unweariedly pursued to its end.

Miss Cobbe describes an experiment that was tried by some ladies at Bristol not long ago. They acquainted themselves with the addresses of the girls going into service, called on each mistress, expressed their interest in the little servant, and asked permission for her to attend a Sunday afternoon class. Invariably it has been found that the mistresses take in good part such visits, made with proper courtesy.

"I saw the village school managed by a young schoolmistress, with boys and girls of all ages all learning together; the mistress told me she had not the least trouble in managing the boys. I never saw a finer set of children, which, considering the pure air, the out-door life, and the milk without stint supplied to them, is not to be wondered at. Most of the foster-parents I saw in Scotland have been taking in children for over twenty years. I did not see a single case of ophthalmia in the boarded-out children. They often come afflicted with strange blurs and blemishes, which disappear by degrees. The children, almost without exception," says Mrs. Senior, "looked strong, and thriving, and happy. It would, in my opinion, be an inestimable advantage to orphans to be boarded out; provided that the system were properly carried out. As to the objections which are raised about the difficulties of finding homes, Miss Florence Hill writes:—'The question for us to consider is, whether homes can be found in England where children can be paid for, in numbers sufficient to receive all who should be boarded out; and I have no hesitation in saying that sufficient good homes can be found if we take the trouble to look for them. I believe this to be the case because, wherever the plan has been established, with a reasonable amount of care to make known what is required, and to awaken sympathy among the respectable working-class for the forlorn condition of the workhouse child, *more homes offer than there are children to put into them.*' Of course this will not be the case directly the plan is introduced into a fresh neighbourhood. A little time is wanted for the foster-parent class to understand what is required of them. In Scotland, where not only pauper and deserted orphan children, but a large number whose parents are in the workhouse, are boarded out, so that the demand for homes is far greater than in England, I have been told over and over again that the number offered far exceeds that of the children to be disposed of."

Mrs. Senior would further add to this a system of Government supervision. The scheme, which is simple enough, consists of a certain number of paid agents to visit the young servants in their places; a certain number of ladies to befriend them; a certain number of post-cards ready addressed for the girls to post upon leaving their situations; one central office, or registry, where their names might be entered into books; and lastly, a certain number of small homes for them to go to in the intervals of service, where they may find help and advice. By the kindness of Mr. Flower (who has given it for this use) a little house has been already opened in Battersea.* It has nice green curtains, with clean little iron beds, and a cheerful front sitting-room, a convenient wash-house, fresh air, an enclosed yard, and a matron. Here the girls may cook, sew, rest, find advice and useful help. It is nothing new that the little homes have to give; but after all it is not anything new that any of us want; only the old blessing of asking and receiving, of friends and helpful succour answering to the call of our forlorn voices.

And what prayer, in words, in works, in good will, was ever prayed that was not answered in one way or another? We look life in the face, and hear of the laws that seem to rule its progress; we watch years go by, read Reports, see people in every sort of trouble, failure, and flurry, trying to help, regulate, and order the disorder. Some are praying to God, others praying to men. As we watch the rout go by, as we travel along it ourselves, we cannot but be struck by the importance of every day, as well as by its profanity, by the meaning of its trivialities, amenities, and co-operations, all dominated by a law of which we dimly recognise the rule,—a law to which we may open our hearts if we will, as it reaches us in this our common every day, our sacred every day. And by this supreme law each one of us in turn is touched. You are responsible to it, you wretched orphans flung upon evil shores; you are responsible, wise matrons, safe in port, anchored and sheltered from storm; you children, awakening in rows in the wards of the great refuges; you rulers and overseers, looking out afar; you critics and penny-a-liners and young men, maidens and old maids, according to your light and your power of life.

And besides this solemn law of the duty, varying in degree for each of us, there is also a gift, divine though we call it human, a multiplying, renovating charity, of pity and goodwill. It does not fail though the multitude is so great, and though the bread and the fishes that have been given by the Master to dispense among the hungry crowd seem so inadequate to their wants.

* 33 Robertson Street, Battersea.

The Danish National Theatre.

THE only instance in which unfamiliar forms of culture have a claim on public attention is when they are wholly original and individual. The development of the ages is now too vast for men to spare much time in the study of what is merely imitative, and even reproductions of ancient phases of art and literature must now be very excellent or very vigorous to succeed in arresting general interest. But art is no respecter of persons, and merit in nations as in individuals is still not measured by wealth or size, and it sometimes happens even in these days that what is most worthy of attention is to be discovered in narrow and impoverished circles of men, the light of genius burning all the clearer for the atmospheric compression in which it is forced to exist. Of modern peoples none has displayed the truth of this fact more notably than Denmark, a country so weak and poor, so isolated among inimical races, so forlorn of all geographical protection, that its very place among nations seems to have been preserved by a series of accidents, and which yet has been able, by the brilliance of the individual men of genius it has produced, to keep its distinct and honourable place in the world of science and letters during a century and a half of perilous struggle for existence. There is not another of the minor countries of Europe that can point to names so universally illustrious in their different spheres as Ørsted, Thorwaldsen, Øhlenschläger, Madvig, H. C. Andersen. The labours of these men, by nature of their craft, speak to all cultivated persons; the electromagnetic discoveries of Ørsted tinge all modern habits of life; the fairy-stories of Andersen make an enchanted land of every well-conducted nursery. These men have scarcely influenced thought in their own land more strongly than they have the thought of Europe. But I purpose here to speak a little of a form of culture which has penetrated no less deeply into the spiritual life of Denmark, and which by its very nature is restricted in its workings to the native intelligence.

Of all the small nations of Europe, Denmark is the only one that has succeeded in founding and preserving a truly national dramatic art. One has but to compare it in this respect with the surrounding lands of a cognate character, with Sweden, Norway, Holland, to perceive at once the complete difference of individuality. In all these countries one finds, to be sure, what is called a Royal Theatre, but on examining the *répertoire* one is sure at once to find the bulk of acting plays to be translations or adaptations. If the popular taste is romantic, the tendency will be

towards Iffland and Kotzebue, tempered with a judicious selection from Shakespere and Schiller ; if farcical, perhaps native talent will be allowed to compete with adaptations from Scribe, while the gaps will be filled up with vaudevilles and operettas translated from the French, and set on the stage purely to give employment to the gregarious multitude that sing tolerably and act most intolerably. In such a depressing atmosphere as this the stage can hardly be said to exist ; what poetical talent the nation possesses, pours itself into other channels, and sometimes a theatre is found stranded in a position of such hopeless incompetence, that it is ready to adopt the masterpieces of the contemporary English drama.

But the old dingy theatre that is being at this very moment pulled down in Copenhagen has another tale to tell than such a dreary one. If, like the lady in the "Thousand and One Nights," it might stand as long as it had an interesting story to relate, it would deliver a long series of lectures on the literary life of Denmark, and would secure its existence for a good many weeks. For within its walls almost all that is really national and individual in the poetic literature of the country has found at one time or another its place and voice. Within the walls that now no more will ever display their faded roses and smoky garlands to the searching flare of the footlights, almost every Danish poet of eminence—with the exception of Grundtvig, perhaps every one—has received the plaudits of the people, and been taken personally into the sympathy of the nation in a way no merely study-writer ever can be taken. Perhaps this is why the Danes preserve such an astonishing personal love for their dead poets. Men who had seen the white, sick face of Ewald grow whiter under the storms of applause, and the long thin fingers press the aching brow in an agony of nervous agitation ; the next generation that saw Öhlenschläger, large and burly, in his stall, receive the plaudits like a comfortable burgess, one of themselves ; the younger men that knew the haughty, keen face of Hertz, master of all the best æsthetic culture that his age could give, yet a Dane in every feature, and a type to every romantic youth of what a Dane should be—these men had a sense of being a living part and parcel of the national poetic life such as no citizens have had save at Athens and Florence and Weimar ; and their sympathy has been so far wider than these that it was not the emotion of a single circle, however brilliant, of a single city, however potent, but of a whole nation not potent or brilliant at all, but beating to the heart's core with that warm blood of patriotism that has sent its men, again and again, to certain, hopeless death with cheerful resignation. It is this living force in the dramatic art of Denmark that makes it worthy of study. No lyric or scenic excellence in native writers, no glittering and costly ornament, could have secured to the Royal Theatre of Copenhagen the wonderful influence that it has had over public life, if it had not in some way been able to stand as the representative of the best national life of the country. It is this that gives it a unique place in the history of the modern drama. In Copenhagen the stage has been, what it has not for centuries been in London, the organ by which poetry of the

highest class speaks to the masses. The nearest parallel to the position of the Danish Theatre is found amongst ourselves in the new-born popularity of concerts of classical music. Just as crowds throng to hear the elaborate and delicate harmonies of Beethoven and Schumann, till one is set wondering how much of this is habit and fashion, and how much appreciation of the noblest art, so in Copenhagen is one astonished and puzzled to see crowded audiences, night after night, receive with applause dramatic poems that take a place among the most exquisite and subtle works in the language.

Nor is the position of the theatre as a means of widely popularising the higher culture the only or the main service it performs: it is a school for patriotism. Here the people hear their native tongue spoken most purely and most beautifully, and the peculiar character of the ablest plays on the boards gives the audience an opportunity of almost breathing a condensed air of love for the Fatherland. The best Danish comedies, the old-fashioned but still popular pieces of Holberg, deal almost wholly with life in Copenhagen, and after the lapse of 150 years the satire in them which lashes an affectation of German taste and German fashion is as welcome and as fresh as ever; the most popular tragedies are those of Öhlenschläger, almost without exception occupied with the mythic or the heroic life of early Scandinavia; the later dramas of Heiberg mingle poetic romance with life out in the woods and by the lakes of Zealand; while the farces of Hostrup never stray outside the walls of Copenhagen, but point out to a keenly-appreciative audience the ludicrous side of the men and women that jostle them hourly in the familiar, homely streets. In a community so small that almost everybody knows everybody else, a copious literature studded with local allusion becomes as intensely interesting to the populace as the *vers de société* of a witty poet become to his circle of admirers and butts; and when the interest so captured is led to concentrate itself on topics of the gravest national importance, art approaches its apotheosis, and nears the fulfilment of its highest aim. In fact, if a foreign power secured Copenhagen and understood the temper of the people, its first act would undoubtedly be to shut for an indefinite period the doors of the Royal Theatre.

The fact that at this very time the building that has been the scene of so much intellectual vitality is being pulled down to make room for a splendid successor just finished at its side, has led me to take this opportunity of saying a few words on what is unique and important about dramatic art in Denmark. The ugly old theatre was a disgrace to Kongens Nytorv, the handsome central square of Copenhagen, and its area has long been quite unable to offer comfortable sitting room to the audience. It is well that it should be pulled down and a better house be opened; but in the moment of destruction a thought of gratitude seems due to the building that has seen so many triumphs of art, so many brilliant poetical successes, and had so large a share in the best life of the

country. It is one of the oldest theatres in Europe, having reached the age, most unusual in this class of houses, of 126 years. In Paris, where dramatic art has so lovingly been studied, and where the passion for scenic representation was so early developed, only two out of the thirty or more theatres now open dates from the last century—the Théâtre Français from 1782, and the Théâtre Porte St. Martin from 1781. The latter suffered so severely under the Commune in 1871 that it hardly comes into the category. Here in London almost all the theatres date, in their present condition, later than 1800, although several of the most important occupy the same classical ground as houses that have been destroyed by fire. This greatest enemy of theatres has wonderfully spared the stage at Copenhagen, where the Royal Theatre, built in 1784, has contrived to last till now, to undergo the more ignominious fate of being pulled stone from stone.

When Eigtroed, the architect, finished it in 1748, it was not the eyesore that it has been of late years; it was considered an adornment to that very Kongens Nytorv that now groans under its hideousness. The growth of the audience, the necessity of more machinery and more furniture, has at various times obliged the management to throw out frightful fungus-growths, to heave up the roof, and make all manner of emendations that have destroyed the last vestiges of shapeliness. It was the first theatre where the Danish drama found a firm place to settle in; and after doubtful and dangerous sojourns in Grønnegade and other places, this secure habitation was a great step forward. It seated, however, only 800 spectators; and although the decorations and machinery were so magnificent that a performance was announced gratis, merely that there might be an opportunity of impressing society with a Mercury on clouds, and Night brought on in an airy chariot drawn by two painted horses, still a modern audience might have grumbled at having to spend an evening, or rather an afternoon—for the performances began at 5 P.M.—in the old building. The stage was lighted up with tallow candles, which had to be briskly snuffed by a special attendant; the orchestra could only muster ten pieces, and the wardrobe suffered from a complaint the most terrible for green-rooms, poverty of costumes. The heart and soul of the management was Holberg, that most gifted of all Danes before or since, who more than any other man has succeeded in lifting his country into an honourable place among the nations. If it be true, as has been said, that Goethe created for Germany the rank it holds in the literature of Europe, much more true is it that Denmark owes to Holberg what rank she has succeeded in attaining. This remarkable man played so important a rôle in the dramatic life of the early times of which we speak, that a few words seem demanded here on his life and personal character. He was born, like so many other men who have made a fame in Denmark, in Norway, in 1684. When he was eighteen he came up to study at the University of Copenhagen, and, being left almost entirely destitute, was thrown on the resources of his own talents. Wandering all over the north of Europe,

he came at last to Oxford, where he lived for two years, studying at the University, and subsisting in the meanwhile by teaching languages and music. After years of extraordinary adventures, including a journey on foot from Brussels to Marseilles, a narrow escape from the Inquisition at Genoa, and a return journey on foot from Rome over the Alps to Amsterdam, he settled in Copenhagen about the year 1716. Already a great part of his historical works was written, and he gave himself now to law and to philology. His name became generally famous in Denmark as that of a brilliant writer on the subjects just mentioned, but no one suspected that a series of comic poems, published under the pseudonym of Hans Mikkelsen, and over which Copenhagen became periodically convulsed with laughter, were produced by the grave Professor of Jurisprudence. From 1710 to 1728 he successfully preserved this authorship a secret from the world; but when a circle of those friends to whom his humorous genius was known besought him to try to write for the Danish stage comedies that should banish French adaptation from the theatrical *répertoire*, in assenting he took a place before the public as a comic poet which has outshone all his reputation in science and history, bright as that still is. Until then Copenhagen had possessed a German and a French, but no Danish theatre. The first of Holberg's Danish comedies that was produced was the *Pewterer turned Politician* (*Den politiske Kandstøber*), a piece that recalls somewhat the style of Ben Jonson in the *Alchemist*, but which for the rest is so wholly original, so happily constructed in plot, so exquisitely funny in evolution, that it is one of the most remarkable works ever produced in Scandinavia. Had Molière never lived, the genius of Holberg would have proved itself superhuman; but the fact is that the Danish poet, in the course of his travels, had had opportunity to study the French comedian thoroughly, and had adopted the happy notion of satirising affectation and vice in Copenhagen, not in the same but in a parallel way with that adopted by Molière in lashing Parisian society. In consequence, the series of Holberg's dramas display no imitation, but a general similarity of method, while the precise nature of the wit is characteristic only of himself. These comedies so far belong to the school represented among ourselves by Ben Jonson, and in our own day by Dickens, that the source of amusement is not found in intrigue, nor mainly in the development of the plot, but in the art of bringing prominently forward certain oddities of character, which in the Shakesperian time were called "humours." Holberg's loving study of the French drama preserved him from the temptation of exaggerating these studies of eccentric character into caricature; the odd lines are just deepened a little beyond what nature commonly presents, and that is all. These comedies show no signs of losing their freshness. They are as popular on the stage to-day as they were 150 years ago, and compared with those English plays that just preceded them, the writings of Congreve and Colley Cibber, they appear astonishingly modern, and as superior in wit as they are in morality and decency; while Holberg's

humorous epics and lyrics have long ago gone the way of most such writing, and are honourably unread in every gentleman's library. The thirty Holbergian comedies formed the nucleus of the Danish drama. It was in 1722, before the actors had found a home in Kongens Nytorv, that the *Pentester turned Politician* was produced, and the rest followed in quick succession. Some remarks in one of them against the German tendencies of the ministry then in power had the effect of bringing upon Holberg the displeasure of men in authority; an attempt was made to burn the play publicly, together with another peccant book of Holberg's, the comic epic of *Feder Paars*, and to punish the author. Fortunately King Frederick the Fourth took the poet's part, and this incident only served to intensify popular interest in dramatic representations.

When the Royal Company flitted over to Kongens Nytorv in 1748, Holberg was the heart and soul of the new enterprise. The *répertoire* consisted almost entirely of his own comedies, and of translations of the best pieces of Molière. He was fortunate enough to secure in Clementin and Londemann two interpreters whose traditions still cling about the stage, and whose genius, if we may trust the reports of contemporary writers, was in the highest degree suited to set the creations of the great humorist in the broadest and wittiest manner before an audience that had to be educated into appreciation. The memory of these two men is so far interesting to us, as there seems no doubt that it is to them and to their great master that we owe the chaste and judicious style in acting which still characterises the Danish stage. A stranger from London or Berlin, we will not say from Paris, is struck in Copenhagen by the wonderful reserve and poetical repose that characterises the general tone of the acting: no one is permitted to rave and saw the air; it is preferred to lose a little in sensation, if thereby something can be gained in completeness. The great merit now-a-days of Danish acting is not the supreme excellence of a single performance so much as the intelligence of the whole company, and the happy way in which all the important parts are individually made to build up the general harmony of effect. This chastity of art has come down as a tradition from Clementin and Londemann, and for this, if for nothing else, they deserve a moment's recollection.

In 1772, the Royal Theatre entered upon a fresh and fortunate epoch. It became a pensioner of Government, and at the same time received its first important enlargement. This crisis was simultaneous with two events of literary importance. One was the production of the lyrical dramas of Johannes Ewald, the poet who composed the well-known national hymn,

King Christian stood by the high mast,

and who composed, lying on his back in bed, dying, like Heine, by inches, some of the masterpieces of Danish dramatic literature; and the other was the production of a single play so unique in its character that it is worth while to pause a few minutes to discuss it. In the course of fifty years, no poet had risen up whose talents in any way fitted him to carry on the war

against affectation that Holberg had fought so bravely and so successfully. The comedies of that author, however, still kept the stage, and the particular forms of folly satirised by them had long ago died and faded into thin air. But affectation has a thousand hydra-heads, and if a Hercules annihilate one, there are nine hundred and ninety-nine left. The craving after German support and German fashions was indeed dead in 1772, but another fearful craving had taken its place, a yearning after the stilted and beperiwigged chivalry that passed for good manners and good taste in France, or rather on the French heroic stage. To act in real life like the heroes of the tragedies of Voltaire was the universal bourgeois ideal in Copenhagen, and to talk as much as possible in alexandrines the apex of good breeding. Zaire was the model for a romantic Danish lady. This roccoco taste had penetrated to the theatre, where the nobility and the court had introduced it after the death of Holberg. Voltaire had been translated and imitated with great popular success; and when the Royal Theatre was opened anew after its enlargement, a native tragedy by the court poet, Nordahl Brun, was performed on the opening night. This production, which out-Alzired Alzire, was the finishing touch given to the exotic absurdity. A young man, who had hitherto been known only as the president of a kind of club of wits, rose up and with one blow slew this roned and ruffled creature. His name was Wessel, and the weapon he used was a little tragedy called *Love without Stockings*. The title was quite *en règle*: *Love without Hope*, *Love without Fortune*, *Love without Recompense*, all these were familiar; and why not *Love without Stockings*? The populace thronged to see this novelty, and Zaire and Zarine and all the other fantastic absurdities faded away in a roar of universal laughter. *Love without Stockings* is in some respects unique in literature. The only thing I know that is in any way parallel to it is Lord Buckingham's *Rehearsal*; and it differs from that inasmuch as that, while the *Rehearsal* parodies certain individual pieces of Dryden and others, Wessel's play is a parody of a whole class of dramas. *Love without Stockings*! Cannot one love without possessing stockings? Certainly not, answers Wessel; at all events not in the age of knee-breeches. And out of this thought he develops a plot wholly in accordance with the arbitrary rules of French tragedy, with the three unities intact, with a hero and his friend, a heroine and her confidante, with a Fate that pursues the lovers, with their struggle against it, their fall and tragic death. And the whole is worked out in the most pathetic alexandrines, and with a pompous, ornate diction. At the same time, while he adheres strictly to the rules of French tragedy, he does so in such a manner as to make these rules in the highest degree ridiculous, and to set the faults of this kind of writing in the very plainest light. The wedding day of the two lovers has arrived; all is ready, the priest is waiting, the bride is adorned, but alas! the bridegroom has no stockings, or, at all events, no white ones. What can he do? Buy a pair? But he has no money. Borrow a pair of his bride? On the one hand, it would not be proper; on the other his legs

are too big. But his rival is rich, is the possessor of many pairs of white stockings; the lover fights a hard battle, or makes out that he does, between virtue and love—but love prevails, and he steals a pair. Adorned in them he marches off to the church with his bride, but on the way the larceny is discovered, and the rival holds him up to public disgrace. For one moment the hero is dejected, and then, recalling his heroic nature, he rises to the height of the situation and stabs himself with a pocket-knife. The bride follows his example, then the rival, then the confidante, then the friend; and the curtain goes down on a scene in the approved tragic manner. The purity of the language, and the exactitude with which not only the French dramas, but the Italian arias, then so much in vogue, were imitated, secured an instant success for this parody, which took a place that it has ever since retained among the classics of its country. The French tragedy fell; an attempt to put Nordahl Brun's *Zarine* on the boards again was a signal failure, and the painted Muse fled back to her own Gallic home. The wonderful promise of *Love without Stockings* was scarcely fulfilled. Wessel wrote nothing more of any great importance, and in a few years both he and Ewald were dead. The death-blow, however, that the first had given to pompous affectation, and the stimulus lent by the second to exalted dramatic writing, brought forward several minor writers, whose very respectable works have scarcely survived them, but who helped to set Danish literature upon a broad and firm basis. The theatre in Kongens Nytorv took a new lease of vitality, and, after expelling the French plays, set itself to turn out a worse cuckoo-fledgling that had made itself a nest there—the Italian Opera. This institution, with all its disagreeable old traditions, with its gang of castrati and all its attendant aliens, pressed hard upon the comfort and welfare of native art, and it was determined to have done with it. The Italians were suddenly sent about their business, and with shrill screams brought news of their discomfiture to Dresden and Cologne. Then for the first time the Royal Theatre found space to breathe, and since then no piece has been performed within its walls in any other language than Danish. When the present writer heard Gluck's opera of *Iphigenia in Tauris* sung there some weeks ago with infinite delicacy and finish, it did not seem to him that any charm was lost through the fact that the libretto was in a language intelligible to all the hearers. To supply the place of the banished Opera, the Danes set about producing lyrical dramas of their own. In the old Hartmann, grandfather to the now living composer of that name, a musician was found whose settings of Ewald have had a truly national importance. The airs from these operas of a hundred years ago live still in the memory of every boy who whistles. From this moment the Royal Theatre passed out of its boyhood into a confident manhood, or at least into an adolescence which lasted without further crisis till 1805.

It was in that year that the young and unknown poet, Adam Öhenschläger, wearing out a winter in Germany under all the worst pangs of

nostalgia, found in the University Library at Halle a copy of the Icelandic of Snorro Sturleson's *Heimskringla*. The event was as full of import to Scandinavian literature as Luther's famous discovery of the Bible was to German liberty. In Öhlenschläger's own words, he read the forgotten classic as one reads a packet of new-found letters from the dearest friend of one's youth; and when he reached Hakon Jarl's *Saga* in his reading, he laid the folio aside, and in a kind of ecstasy sat down to write a tragedy on that subject, which was the firstfruits of a new epoch, and destined to revolutionise poetic literature, not in Denmark only, but throughout the North. To follow the development of Öhlenschläger's genius would take us too far from our present enquiry, and belongs rather to the history of poetry proper than to that of the Danish theatre. It suffices to point out that the real addition to national dramatic art given by these tragedies was that the whole subject-matter of them was taken from the legendary history of the race. Instead of borrowing themes from Italian romance or German tradition, this poet took his audience back to the springs of their own thought and legend; in the sagas of Iceland he found an infinite store of material for tragic dramas in which to develop emotions kindred to the people in whose language they were clothed, and to teach the unfailing lesson of patriotism to a nation that had almost forgotten its own mediæval glories. In place of the precious sticklers for the unities, Öhlenschläger set before his eyes Shakespere for a model; but his worship was less blind than that of the German romanticists, and did not lead him into extravagances so wild as theirs. In later years, under the influence of Goethe, he fell into a looser and more florid style, but in his earlier dramas he is, perhaps, the coldest and most severe playwright that has ever succeeded in winning the popular ear. So intent was he on insisting on the heroic, primal forms of life, so careless of what was merely sentiment and adornment, that he presents in one of his most famous tragedies, *Palnatoke*, the unique spectacle of a long drama, in which no female character is introduced. It was not intentionally so; simply Öhlenschläger forgot to bring a woman into his plot. He rewarded the patience of the public by dedicating his next play, *Axel and Valberg*, entirely to romantic love. The success of this piece on the stage was so great, that, as the poet was away from Copenhagen and wished the printing to be delayed, large sums were given for MS. copies, and a clerk busied himself day after day in writing out the verses for enthusiastic playgoers. As it was seventy years ago with fashionable people, so is it to this day with every youth and maiden. The fame of Öhlenschläger, like that of Walter Scott amongst ourselves, has broadened and deepened, even while it has somewhat passed out of the recognition of the cultivated classes. It is usual nowadays, in good society, to vote Öhlenschläger a trifle old-fashioned; but for every thoughtful boy his tragedies are the very basis upon which his first ideas of culture are built up; they are to him the sum and crown of poetry, while all other verses seem but offshoots and imitations; they are to

him what bread is among the necessities of life. He measures the other poets, that he learns to know, by Öhlenschläger, but there is no one by whom he dreams of measuring him ; he looks at him as the sun of their planet-circle, and he knows nothing yet of any other solar system. Just as these tragedies are the foundation of a Dane's education, so for the Danish stage they have always been, and will remain, the foundation of everything that the theatre can offer of serious drama, the very cornerstone of the whole edifice ; and, rightly enough, an ambitious actor's first desire is to fit himself for the performance of the heroic parts in these, the manner and style being already traditional. The strings that Öhlenschläger touched had never before been heard in Denmark ; he led his audience into a world of thought and vision where its feet had never stood before, and he spoke in a language that had never yet been declaimed from behind the footlights. It was not, therefore, wonderful that some years went by before a school of actors arose whose powers were adequate to the burden of these new dramas, and who could be the poet's worthy interpreters. Without such interpreters the tragedies of Öhlenschläger might have passed from the stage into the library, and their great public function never have been fulfilled. But as early as 1813, in Ryge, a man of superb histrionic genius, an actor was found wholly worthy to bear the weight of such heroic parts as Hakon Jarl and Palnatoke ; some years afterwards Nielsen and his celebrated wife began to share this glory, and the palmy days of Danish acting set in. Fru Nielsen was the Mrs. Siddons of the Danish stage ; in her highly-strong sensibility, native magnificence of manner, and passionate grace, she was exactly suited to give the correct interpretation Öhlenschläger's queenly but rather cold heroines.

The next event in the Royal Theatre was the introduction of Shakespeare, but unfortunately he did not arrive alone. The newly-wakened sense for what was lofty and pathetic sought for itself satisfaction in the dreadful dramas of the German *Sturm und Drang Periode*, and threatened to lose its reason completely in the rant and bluster of melodrama. Again the popular sanity was rescued from its perils. We have seen the Danish drama created by the comedies of Holberg, and then fall into the snare of pseudo-classic tragedy ; we have seen it saved from this wrinkled and mincing foe by a single scathing parody, and then fall gradually into a condition of tameness and triviality. Out of this we have seen it suddenly lifted into the zenith of the poetical heavens by the genius of Öhlenschläger ; and now we find it tottering dizzily, and ready to fall into some humiliating abyss. It does not fall, but is carried lightly down into the atmosphere of common life on the wings of a mild and homely muse. Hitherto the stage had been forced to adapt itself to the poet's caprices ; it found in 1825 a poet who would mould himself to its needs and exigencies. Heiberg understood how to bring all forms of scenic individuality into his service ; for the descendants of Holberg he provided laughter, for the interpreters of Öhlenschläger parts that displayed the mild enthusiasm of Scandinavian romanticism. Above all he possessed the art of setting

an audience in good humour at the outset ; his most serious dramas had some easy-going prologue, in which good, honest Copenhageners found themselves lightly laughed at, and their own darling haunts and habits portrayed with a humour that was wholly sympathetic. And, having at his hand more than one young composer of enthusiasm and talent, he brought music and dancing into his plays in a way that the audience found ravishing, and that filled the house as it had never been filled before. His success combined with it that of his intimate friend, Hertz, whose southern imagination and passion flowed out in plays that brought an element of richness and colour into Danish dramatic art that had always been lacking before. Heiberg's wife became the first actress of her time ; and these three friends contrived for a long succession of years to hold the reins in all matters regarding the theatre, and in measure, also, to govern public taste in general questions of art and literature. The two poets are both dead ; Fru Heiberg still lives in honoured age, the centre still of a keenly critical circle. The influence of Heiberg and Hertz on popular feeling in Denmark has been extraordinary ; in a larger country it could not have been so powerful, being, as it was, almost wholly critical and of a peculiarly delicate type. The average cultivated Dane now-a-days is very much what Heiberg has made him ; that is, one of the most refined, fastidious, and superficially-cultivated men of his class in Europe, but wholly incapable of creating new forms of art, and so perfectly satisfied with its past that he has no curiosity for its future. The only new class of drama produced in Denmark in our own time is the farces of Hostrup, pieces that belong to the "cup and saucer" school, and are very much what Robertson would have written, if Robertson had happened to be born a poet. Let us hope that the new house will bring forward new writers, and that the period of lethargy and reaction after the last outburst of poetry is nearly over.

An account of the Danish Royal Theatre would be very imperfect without some notice of a form of art which borrows no aid directly from poetry, but which has developed itself in a quite unique manner at Copenhagen. Already in the middle of the last century, under the direction of Galeotti, the ballet was made a prominent feature on the boards of the Royal Theatre ; and from the records of that time we learn that it already began to be regarded with a seriousness that has hardly been afforded to it elsewhere. However, it was not until about fifty years ago that it took the peculiar form which it now holds, and which gives it a national importance. If one can fancy an old Greek in whose brain the harmonious dances of a divine festival still throbbed, waking suddenly to find himself settled in this commonplace century as dancing-master at the Royal Theatre of Copenhagen, one can form some notion of the personality of Bournonville. This poet, to whom the gift of words seems to have been denied, has retained instead the most divine faculty for devising intricate and exquisite dances, and for framing stories of a dramatic kind, in which all the action is performed in dumb show, and consists of a suc-

cession of mingled tableaux and dances. These dumb poems—in the severely intellectual character of which the light and trivial prettiness of what all the rest of Europe calls a ballet is forgotten—are mostly occupied with scenes from the mythology and ancient history of Scandinavia, or else reflect the classicism of Thorwaldsen, with whose spirit Bournonville is deeply imbued. No visitor to Copenhagen should miss the opportunity of seeing one of these beautiful pieces, the best of all, perhaps, being *Thrymsquiden* (the “Lay of Thrym,” a giant-king), to which Hartmann has set the wildest, most magical music conceivable. Certain scenes in this ballet remain on the mind as visions of an almost ideal loveliness. The piece is occupied with the last days of the *Æsir*, the gods of heathen Scandinavia, against whom, it will be remembered, betrayed by Loki, the Evil God, one of themselves, the powers of darkness and chaos rose, and who sank to destruction in the midst of a general conflagration of the universe. When once the natural disappointment that follows the discovery of these colossal figures of the imagination dwarfed to human proportions, the vigour and liveliness of the scenes, the truly poetic conceptions, the grace and originality of the dances, surprise and delight one to the highest degree; and the vivid way in which the dumb poem is made to interpret its own development is worthy of particular attention, the insipidity of ordinary ballet-plots giving all the more piquancy to the interest of this.

It cannot be wholly without value to us to be made aware of the success of other nations in fields where we have been notoriously unsuccessful ourselves. Without falling into any of the jeremiads that have been only too plentiful of late years, we may soberly confess that our own theatres have long ceased to be a school for poetic education, or influential in any way as leaders of popular thought or taste. They have not attempted to claim any moral or political power; they have existed for amusement only, and now, in the eyes of most cultivated persons, they have ceased even to amuse. Over the drop-scene of the Royal Theatre at Copenhagen there stands in large gold letters this inscription: “*Ei blot for Lyst*”—not merely for enjoyment; and in these simple words may be read the secret of its unique charm and the source of its power. It has succeeded, not prudishly or didactically, but in a broad and healthy spirit, to lead the popular thought in high and ennobling directions. It has not stooped to ask the lowest of its auditors how near the edges of impropriety, how deep into the garbage of vulgarity and slang, how high in the light air of triviality it dared to go; it has not interpreted comedy by farce, nor turned tragedy into melodrama, nor dirtied its fingers with burlesque, but has adapted itself as far as possible, meekly and modestly, to the requirements of the chastity of art, and has managed for a century and a half to support a school of original actors and a series of national plays without borrowing traditions or dramas from its neighbours. Denmark is an extremely insignificant country; but that exemplary insect, the ant, is also small, and yet the wisest of men deigned to recommend it to human attention.

Comets' Tails.

WHEN we consider the surprising nature of the phenomena presented by the tails of comets, we can scarcely wonder that the most startling theories have been suggested in explanation. Their whole behaviour is anomalous. The head of a comet, or rather the bright almost point-like nucleus, obeys the law of gravity; and wonderful though the nature of the comet's orbit sometimes is, extending into depths so remote that the mind shrinks from pursuing the comet on its journey through them, there is not a mile of the comet's voyage which does not exemplify in the exactest manner the laws recognised by Newton. But it is quite otherwise with the tail, if we regard the tail as a material object carried along with the comet. The end of the tail, for example, shifts through space with a velocity such as the sun could not possibly generate by his attractive influence, mighty though that influence is, nor control if otherwise generated. Cometic tails are flung forth from the head, or at least appear to be flung forth, with a rapidity far exceeding even the tremendous velocity with which a comet, passing near the sun, sweeps round that orb at the time of nearest approach. Then the varieties of appearance presented by comets' tails, the singular changes of shape in one and the same tail, the existence of more tails than one, and a number of other strange circumstances, seem to defy explanation, and so to invite the wildest speculation.

We propose to consider here some of the more promising attempts which men of science have made to solve the mystery of comets' tails, and to touch also on some ideas which, though advanced by persons more or less distinguished in various departments of science, appear on examination to be untenable.

It is manifest that if we would form a just theory of cometic appendages, we must pay special attention to their more remarkable characteristics, because in this way we shall be able to get rid of innumerable theories, accounting fairly enough for ordinary appearances, but irreconcilable with those of a less usual nature. But we must also closely consider those features which, though usual with the objects we are considering, are remarkable in the sense that they distinguish these objects from others.

Take, then, first of all the fact that ordinarily the tail of a comet extends from the head in a direction almost exactly opposite to that in which the sun lies, or, in fact, has very nearly the position which the shadow of the head would have if a comet were of such a nature as to cast a shadow outwards into space. Being luminous, instead of dark,

a comet's tail has been described on account of this peculiarity as a *negative shadow*.

If comets' tails were always of moderate dimensions, we might readily enough conceive that their position was not inconsistent with the supposition that they are material appendages, unchanging in constitution though changing in position. Some form of repulsion exerted by the sun on such appendages might (after the manner seen in certain electrical experiments) keep them always streaming out on the side farthest from him.

But the enormous dimensions of cometic tails, as well as their wonderfully rapid formation, extension, and changes of figure, will not permit us to adopt such a theory for an instant. The consideration of a single instance will show conclusively that a comet's tail must be otherwise explained. We take, as one of the most remarkable cases of the kind, the comet of 1680. This comet was invisible for four days during the time of its nearest approach to the sun. All this time it was circling rapidly round; in other words, it was swiftly changing its direction of motion, and its position with respect to the sun. When it first became visible after this rapid movement it was passing away from the sun in a course nearly opposite in direction from that by which it had arrived. And now, *carried in front* of the retreating comet, was a tail more than ninety millions of miles in length. So far as appearances were concerned this tail was the same with which the comet had approached the sun, only it seemed to have been carried almost completely round until now it had nearly the same direction as it had when the comet was approaching the sun. But it could not really have been brandished round in this way, simply because the course which, on this supposition, the end of the tail would have had to follow, would have required a velocity of motion incomparably exceeding any which the sun's attraction could account for. Moreover, a material tail of such dimensions, even though composed of a substance millions of times stronger than steel, would have been rent into fragments by the tremendous forces called into play in a whirling motion of the kind. Knowing, as we do, that the tail of a comet has hardly any substance at all, inasmuch that, despite its enormous volume, it produces no disturbing effect by its attraction even on the smallest members of the solar system, we see how utterly incapable so tenuous a tail would be to bear the strain resulting from the imagined motion. In reality, however, the supposition is one which does not need serious refutation.

But if we suppose, as we seem forced to do, that this tremendous tail, seen after the comet had swept around the sun, was a *new* formation, swept out into its observed position by some mighty repulsive force exerted by the sun, we must adopt the most startling conceptions of the activity of that force. Under gravity the comet's nucleus, although when approaching the sun it arrived at the earth's distance from that orb with a velocity of about twenty-five miles per second, required four more

weeks to complete its journey to the point of nearest approach ; whereas here was a tail equal in length to the earth's distance from the sun flung forth in less than four days. Nay, from the observed direction of the tail and its subsequent changes of position, it became manifest that a few hours' had sufficed to carry the material of its extremity (on the repulsion theory) from the nucleus to that distant position.

It was in order to get over this difficulty that Professor Tait devised the "sea-bird theory" of comets' tails. If we watch a flight of birds travelling nearly in a plane, at a great distance, we notice that when the eye is nearly in the level of the plane, the flight appears like a well-defined streak above the horizon ; but if the plane is so situated that the eye is above or below its level, the flight of birds can hardly be discerned at all. Another phenomenon more frequently observed may also serve to illustrate Professor Tait's theory. We may often see a long, straight, and well-defined cloud towards the horizon which is really the edge-view of a thin, flat cloud of fleecy structure, as we may see by comparing it with others seen above it higher and higher, even to the part of the sky overhead where we look directly through the thinnest part of such clouds. Comparing the dense-looking though narrow cloud on the horizon with the filmy appearance of the cloud overhead, one would not suppose the two could be alike in structure, were it not for the gradual change of appearance of the intermediate clouds as we direct the sight from the horizon upwards. The clouds illustrate what Professor Tait says as to the difference of visibility between an edge-view and a thwart-view of a plane of discrete bodies like his sea-birds. But we must return to the birds themselves to understand his actual application of the phenomenon. It will sometimes happen that a flight of birds viewed athwart will, by a slight and rapidly effected change of position, present the edge-view, and thus change in a few moments from an indistinct cloudlike aspect to the appearance of a sharply defined and heavy streak upon the sky ; or, a flight of birds absolutely invisible in the former position, may thus become in a few moments clearly visible, and extending to a great apparent length.

Professor Tait considers that a tail like that of Newton's comet, instead of being thrown out in a few hours as had been supposed on the repulsion theory, may simply have become visible in the manner of a flight of sea-birds travelling as just described.

When we remember that Professor Sir W. Thomson, when President of the British Association at Edinburgh, spoke enthusiastically of the simplicity and beauty of Tait's sea-bird theory, Tait being on that occasion President of the Section of Physical Science and Mathematics ; and when we further remember that both Thomson and Tait are deservedly eminent for their skill in mathematics (the very soul, as it were, of astronomy), we are unable to receive otherwise than respectfully a theory so strongly supported by authority. And yet this theory is so utterly unsupported by evidence from the observed appearance or behaviour of

comets, that we are compelled to regard its invention by Tait, and its acceptance by Thomson, as having little relation to the actual subject of cometic astronomy. All that can be admitted is indeed simply all that Professor Tait has attempted to show. Given a shoal of meteors ninety millions of miles long and viewed slightly athwart, the shoal, invisible as so situated, might in a few hours become visible along its whole length, and its rapid apparition would correspond with the apparently rapid formation of the tail of Newton's comet after the comet had been circling close around the sun. But how the shoal of meteors came at this time to be in front of the comet, whereas on the sea-bird theory the comet had approached the sun with a shoal of meteors extending millions of miles behind it; why the shoal was visible all the time that the comet was visible both in approaching and in receding; why this edge-view of a shoal was millions of miles thick and utterly unlike such a shoal on any conceivable supposition as to its structure;—these, and a hundred other such questions suggested by the different, the changing, and the complex appearances presented by various comets, find no answer in the sea-bird theory. Until some attempt has been made to reconcile this theory with these peculiarities, the theory can hardly be regarded as seriously advanced. In the meantime we venture to say that no shoal of meteors can be made to account for the appearances presented by comets' tails under any amount of mathematical manipulation.

But there is something so startling in the conception of a repulsive energy competent to account for the formation of comets' tails, that one naturally seeks for any explanation which may account for the phenomena without forcing upon us the idea of so amazing a force. Especially is this the case when we consider that, on the theory of repulsion, the old tails, enormous though their dimensions are, must be regarded as continually dissipated into space; so that we have to suppose a series of tails, each many millions of miles in length, and of vast breadth and thickness, all formed from out of the substance of the comet, and swept for ever away from it. It is easy indeed to speak of the retreating comet gathering its substance together when once beyond the domain of the sun's repulsive power; but the velocity with which that substance is swept away is such as not even the sun himself could overcome by his attractive energy: much less could the feebly attracting head of a comet draw back the stragglers which the sun's repulsion had (on this theory) hurried away into surrounding space.

We can understand, then, that students of astronomy, observing the fact that the comet's tail is directed from the sun, much as a shadow would be, should be led again and again to discuss the inviting theory that the tail is a species of negative shadow. This theory has commonly been presented somewhat on this wise:—The head of a comet is regarded as acting the part of a lens, in such sort that the sun's light is poured into the region behind the comet more richly than elsewhere. Now, if this region were absolutely vacant, the light thus streaming behind the

comet would produce no visible effect: it would illuminate any material substance which happened to be there; but if there was nothing there, then the blackness of interstellar space would prevail in this region as elsewhere. Accordingly the lens theory of comets requires that some matter should be supposed to exist behind the comet (considering the sun as in front); and as the comet takes up in succession many different positions with respect to the sun, we require to have matter all round the comet's head to a distance equal to the observed length of the tail. Either we must regard this matter as belonging to the comet, or as belonging to the solar system. If we take the former view, we should have to suppose that many comets have had the most astonishing dimensions. Newton's, for example, must have been nearly 200 millions of miles in diameter. This is not merely incredible, but impossible, because there would be nothing to retain this enormous sphere of tenuous matter around the central nucleus except the attraction of the nucleus, which we know to be exceedingly feeble from the fact that the smallest planets and satellites are in no way disturbed even by the near approach of the largest comets. Taking Newton's comet, the nucleus of which came within less than a quarter of million of miles of the sun, there was the sun himself at this time in the very heart of the enormous sphere of matter over which the utterly insignificant mass of the nucleus is supposed on the lens theory to have borne sway. The comet could never have carried away from the sun's neighbourhood its attendant sphere of matter.

Much more conceivable is the theory that the matter illuminated by the light streaming behind the comet belongs to the sun's domain, and is always present ready to be illuminated so soon as a comet-lens comes into a suitable position. But in reality the known laws of optics present overwhelming objections against this inviting theory. Supposing for a moment that a comet were able to condense the light behind it in the particular manner which the theory requires, the light thus streaming backwards would form a perfectly straight tail. For although a series of bodies continually setting out from the comet at a moderate velocity in a direction away from the sun would form a curved tail, simply because the comet is all the time moving onwards upon a curved path, yet light travels with such enormous velocity that the longest cometic tail ever seen would be traversed in a few minutes, and in so short a time the comet would not have advanced appreciably on its curved path.* There would not be the slightest visible curvature, therefore, in the tail. If this reasoning seem unsatisfactory to the reader, without diagrams and elaborate explanations, then let him consider the simple fact that comets have had more tails than one, and tails quite differently shaped and placed (a strongly curved tail side by side with one or two perfectly straight tails): this circumstance is manifestly sufficient to overthrow the lens theory of comets' tails.

* It would have advanced many thousand of miles, no doubt, but the direction of its motion would not change appreciably. Though the earth travels 60,000 miles an hour, it takes a whole day to change the direction of her motion a single degree.

Professor Tyndall was led by his researches upon light to a theory somewhat similar to the lens theory, but altogether better worthy of careful consideration.

He had noticed during his experiments on the chemical action of light that almost infinitesimal amounts of matter when diffused in the form of a cloud can "discharge from it by reflection" an astonishing body of light. Let us first understand the exceeding minuteness of the quantities of matter employed in Tyndall's experiments. Having first assured himself of the perfect purity of the tube (3 feet long by 3 inches wide), by so cleansing it that when filled with air, or the vapour of aqueous hydrochloric acid, the most intense light falling on it would not produce the least cloudiness, he proceeded as follows:—"I took," he says, "a small bit of bibulous paper, rolled it up into a pellet not the fourth part of the size of a small pea, and moistened it with a liquid possessing a higher boiling-point than that of water. I held the pellet in my fingers until it had become almost dry, then introduced it into" a small pipe serving for the introduction of gas into the main tube, "and allowed dry air to pass over it into this tube. The air charged with the modicum of vapour thus taken up was subjected to the action of light. A blue actinic cloud began to form immediately, and in five minutes the blue colour had extended quite through the experimental tube. For some minutes this cloud continued blue. . . . but at the end of fifteen minutes a dense white cloud filled the tube. Considering the amount of vapour carried in by the air, the appearance of a cloud so massive and luminous seemed like the creation of a world out of nothing."

But this was far from being all. Minute as was the quantity of light-generating vapour now present in the tube, it was largely reduced before the next experiment was made. "The pellet of bibulous paper was removed and the experimental tube was cleared out by sweeping a current of dry air through it. *This current passed also through the connecting piece in which the pellet of bibulous paper had rested.* The air was at length cut off and the experimental tube exhausted." Then the tube was again filled by the vapour of hydrochloric acid, which had passed through the connecting piece. Now let it be noted how exceedingly, almost infinitesimally, minute was the quantity of light-generating matter remaining in the tube. For, first, the pellet of bibulous paper had absorbed but a minute quantity of liquid; secondly, nearly the whole of what had been absorbed had been allowed to evaporate before the pellet was put into the connecting piece; and, lastly, "the pellet had been ejected, and the tube in which it rested had been for some minutes the conduit of a strong current of pure air." The matter now to be experimented upon was "part of such a residue as could linger in the connecting piece after this process," and had been now carried into the 3-feet tube by the hydrochloric acid. Yet the effects were remarkable when the electric lamp was allowed to pour its light upon the tube. "One minute after the ignition of the lamp," says Tyndall, "a faint cloud showed itself; in two minutes it had filled all the anterior portion of the tube and stretched a considerable way down it; it

developed itself afterwards into a very beautiful cloud-figure; and at the end of fifteen minutes the body of light discharged by the cloud, considering the amount of matter involved in its production, was simply astounding. But, though thus luminous, the cloud was far too fine to dim in any appreciable degree objects placed behind it. The flame of a candle seemed no more affected by it than it would be by a vacuum. Placing a table of print so that it might be illuminated by the cloud itself, it could be read *through* the cloud without any sensible enfeeblement. Nothing could more perfectly illustrate that 'spiritual texture' which Sir John Herschel ascribes to a comet than these actinic clouds. Indeed the experiments prove that matter of almost infinite tenuity is competent to shed forth light far more intense than that of the tail of comets. The weight of the matter which sent this body of light to the eye would probably have to be multiplied by millions to bring it up to the weight of the air in which it hung."

It may fairly be said that Tyndall's luminous cloud is the only terrestrial object yet known to physicists which fairly illustrates the phenomena presented by comets' tails as respects their extreme tenuity and the quantity of light they nevertheless discharge. This is a somewhat important point in any theory of these mysterious objects, and it does not appear to us that astronomers (who have not been altogether successful in determining the nature of comets from their telescopic researches) ought to look askance at physical facts which strikingly illustrate cometic phenomena, merely because those facts were not discovered with a telescope.

Let us see, however, how Tyndall associates his actinic clouds with comets and their appendages.

After briefly describing the difficulties which surround cometic phenomena, he proceeds to present "a speculation which seems to do away with all these difficulties, and which, whether it presents a physical verity or not, ties together the phenomena exhibited by comets" (he should rather have said, *many of the phenomena*) "in a remarkably satisfactory way:—The theory is, that a comet is composed of vapour decomposable by the solar light, the visible head and tail being an actinic cloud resulting from such decomposition; the texture of actinic clouds is demonstrably that of a comet. The tail is not projected matter, but matter precipitated on the solar beams traversing the cometary atmosphere. *It can be proved by experiment that this precipitation may occur either with comparative slowness along the beam, or that it may be practically momentary throughout the entire length of the beam. . . . As the comet wheels round . . . the tail is not composed throughout of the same matter, but of new matter precipitated on the solar beams, which cross the cometary atmosphere in new directions. . . . The tail is always turned from the sun for the following reason:—Two antagonistic powers are brought to bear upon the cometary vapour—the one "a chemical power tending to form the invisible cloud, the other a heating power tending to dissipate it into invisible vapour. "As a matter of fact, the sun emits the two agents*

here involved. There is nothing hypothetical in the assumption of their existence." That visible cloud should be formed behind the head, or in the space occupied by the head's shadow, it is only necessary to assume that the sun's heating rays are absorbed more copiously by the head than the chemical rays. This augments the relative superiority of the chemical rays behind the head, and enables them to form the visible cloud which constitutes the tail. The old tail, so soon as the head by its onward motion ceases to screen it, is dissipated by the sun's heat. *The dissipation, like the formation, not being instantaneous, the curvature of the tail and the direction of the curvature are accounted for.* Other peculiarities are shown to be explicable by the theory; and, in particular, Tyndall remarks that "the cometary envelopes and various other appearances may be accurately reproduced through the agency of cyclonic movements introduced by heat among" the chemical clouds with which the theory has to deal.*

There are many strong points in this theory, and it shows to great advantage, in particular, by comparison with the theory which, as we have seen, found special favour with mathematicians—the sea-bird theory. It not only explained the facts which had suggested it, but was shown by its author to accord with many characteristics of comets, some among them being such as had been long regarded as most perplexing.

A comet, however, which astronomers were able to study more thoroughly than any other ever known seems to us to have afforded decisive evidence in favour of the repulsion theory of comets' tails, and against the ingenious theory just described. We refer to Donati's comet, or the comet of 1858-59.

This remarkable object, like most large comets, presented the appearance of concentric envelopes around the head. These were apparently raised by the sun's heat, and each, after being formed, rose gradually farther and farther from the nucleus, being succeeded, after it had reached a certain distance, by another envelope, this by another, and so on; so that at the time of greatest development three well-marked envelopes were simultaneously visible, besides the gradually fading remnants of two or three others. The great curved tail which formed so remarkable a feature of that comet presented the usual appearance of being formed by the sweeping away of the outer parts of the envelope by a solar repulsive force; and its well-marked curvature showed that if such a

* The following remarks by Tyndall suggest strange possibilities:—"There may be comets," he says, "whose vapour is undecomposable by the sun, or which, if decomposed, is not precipitated. This view opens out the possibility of invisible comets wandering through space, perhaps sweeping over the earth and affecting its sanitary condition without our being otherwise conscious of their passage. As regards tenuity, I entertain a strong persuasion that out of a few ounces (the possible weight assigned by Sir John Herschel to certain comets) of iodide of allyl vapour, an actinic cloud of the magnitude and luminousness of Donati's comet might be manufactured."

repulsive force had really acted, the rate at which it swept the matter of the tail outwards, though very rapid, was by no means so rapid as the motion of light. The tail visible at any given time (during the chief splendour of the comet) was the work of several days, not of a few minutes, whether the repulsion theory or Tyndall's were the true explanation. But now, as if to illustrate what Tyndall says of the various rates at which the chemical cloud may be formed and dissipated (see the last two italicised passages in our account of his theory), a straight tail became visible beside the curved one. It was not visible in England, but was well seen in America. This, of course, was in agreement with the repulsion theory also, since it only required that the comet's head should be regarded as consisting of two kinds of matter, one kind undergoing repulsion with exceeding swiftness, so as to form the straight tail, the other repelled with a more moderate velocity, and so forming the curved tail.

So far, then, there was no special reason for preferring either theory. But now a circumstance was noted which, so far as we can see, the repulsion theory is alone competent to explain. We must note that the reasoning which follows, though it presented itself independently to the present writer, was long before adduced by Professor Norton, of Yale College, in America, the well-known author of the auroral theory of the solar corona. The great mass of the matter undergoing repulsion was carried into the large, bright, curved tail. We can conceive that in thus moving off, this matter, being so much greater in quantity, would be apt to carry off along with it, and, as it were, entangled in its substance, portions of the matter which should have gone into the small tail—the matter, namely, on which the sun's repulsive action was able to act more swiftly, sweeping it out into straight lines. The matter thus carried away into the wrong tail, as it were, would be always ready to escape from the entanglement so soon as the matter which had carried it off began, through wide spreading, to leave it free. And then at once the sun's repulsive action would act upon this matter precisely as on the matter of the same kind forming the straight tail; it would repel this matter, which had escaped from the entangling matter of the curved tail, and sweep it away in a straight line, so that it would form, as it were, a sort of subsidiary tail, not extending from the head, but from a particular part of the curved tail. This happening from time to time, the curved tail would manifestly have a number of straight tails, or streamers, all extending on the same side of it as the straight tail which streamed from the head. Now this was precisely the appearance presented by the curved tail of Donati's comet—a sort of combing out, or striation, the direction of the different streamers corresponding exactly with that which would result from the mode of formation just described.

It is difficult to see how Tyndall's theory can be reconciled with this peculiarity of appearance. For, if we regard the straight tail as formed by the sun's chemical rays, a portion of his heat rays being absorbed by

the action of part of the head, it would be necessary to suppose that the other straight tails—the streamers, that is, from the great curved tail—were similarly formed. If this were so, then at various points along the length of the curved tail there must have been matter of the same nature as that matter in the head to which the chief straight tail is attributed. But this looks very like admitting that the great tail consisted partially of matter repelled from the head; and if we admit repulsion at all, we may as well admit it as entirely operative. We are not indeed bound to do so; in fact, in our opinion, one of the most serious mistakes which modern theorists in all departments of science are apt to make is, the endeavour to explain phenomena as due to one or other of two or more causes, when in reality both causes or several may be in operation. Still it is manifest that, in the present case, the only positive evidence is in favour of the repulsion theory, since, starting even from Tyndall's theory, we find evidence of the repulsion of matter from the head into the great curved tail.

We have said nothing here of the meteoric theory of comets*, because, so far as is known, it is the head only of comets to which that theory applies. It is known that meteors follow in the track of the head, that is, in the same orbit; but the tail does not at any time agree in position with the orbit, and we have no sufficient reason from observation to suppose that the tail consists of meteoric matter, although of course it is quite possible that the repulsion by which the tail seems to be formed may carry into the tail matter of the same sort as that out of which the meteoric attendants are formed.

The observations made with the spectroscope and with the polariscope upon the comet which so lately adorned our skies have not thrown any noteworthy light on the subject. It has been shown that part of the light of the tail gives the same spectrum as the small comets heretofore observed—a spectrum somewhat hastily associated with that of carbon—and that part of the light is probably reflected sun-light. But the observations have been imperfect and unsatisfactory.

We may still say, as Sir John Herschel long since said,—“There is, beyond question, some profound secret and mystery of nature concerned in the phenomena of comets' tails. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that future observation, borrowing every aid from rational speculation, grounded on the progress of physical science generally (especially those branches of it which relate to the ethereal or imponderable elements), may ere long enable us to penetrate this mystery, and to declare whether it is really *matter*, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, which is projected from their heads with such extravagant velocity, and if not impelled, at least directed in its course by a reference to the sun as its point of avoidance.”

* This theory has been very fully dealt with in former volumes of this magazine.

A Witch Trial in the Fourteenth Century.

In this paper we intend to follow the course which the trial actually took. Perhaps it would be possible to improve the story it tells by throwing it into another shape. But it is also possible that such a process might effectually destroy its value as an illustration of manners and superstition five hundred years ago.

We will suppose that our readers have paid a visit to the Châtelet—the Old Bailey of Paris—on Saturday, the 30th of July, 1390. Originally erected as a *tête de pont*, to cover the entrance of the city by way of the Bridge au Change, it consisted of a square keep, with turrets at the angles. Through its centre, straight to the bridge, ran a narrow passage, with heavy gates at its extremities. The last crumbling remains of the Châtelet were removed in 1792. But four hundred years earlier, though it was then so ancient that the date of its foundation had passed out of memory, it was still formidable. Like many another old fortification, the course of time, in removing it from the outskirts of the city to the centre, had turned it into a prison. Having surveyed its massy walls and grim old battlements, we penetrate through a number of gloomy corridors to the Grièche, or woman's cell. It is a low vaulted chamber of considerable extent—dim, damp, and unclean exceedingly. It has no furniture: a stone bench which runs round it serves as a seat by day and a couch by night. And yet this miserable lodging must be paid for, at the rate of two deniers a night, by those who cannot or will not pay a great deal more for accommodation hardly superior elsewhere. The authorities do not provide the prisoners with food. Of this, however, there is seldom any scarcity. Commiseration for the captive is one of the foremost duties inculcated by mediæval religion, and the bags which hang from the gratings of the Châtelet are filled daily with the contributions of the charitable. Besides, it is so common for the conscientious to traverse the city, at stated times, in search of alms for those in durance, that contemporary satire has seized upon the practice as one of the many characteristics of hypocrisy.

The prisoners in the Grièche are variously occupied. Some exchange blows, for here not only do they quarrel, but not unfrequently carry their contention to a fatal close. Some merely exchange coarse epithets. Some carouse, for here money will procure anything. And some—yoke-fellows in iniquity these—arrange their defence, and discuss the probabilities of conviction. The last is the occupation of the two committed on the charge of bewitching and poisoning Hainsellin Planete and his wife,

Agnesot, of the Rue des Fosses St. Germain. One of the two, Margot de la Barre, *alias* du Coignet, is a hard-featured, determined-looking woman, between fifty and sixty, who, previous to her incarceration, kept a tavern of no good repute in the Rue Froidmantel, a street in the vicinity of the Louvre, as indeed are all the streets mentioned in this trial. The other, Marion la Droiturriere, *alias* l'Estallée, is less than half the age of her companion, but of quite another exterior, being remarkably tall and thin. It is evident that she has been a gaudy bird at no distant date; but imprisonment has stripped off much of her gay plumage, and sorely bedraggled the rest. She is by profession what we would term "an unfortunate"—one of the highest class, however, being a member of a singular body attached to the French court.

The gaolers appear, and Margot is led up to the hall of judgment. On this occasion the court is composed of the Provost of the Châtelet, his lieutenant, his auditor, the King's advocate, and six other personages learned in the law, termed examiners. The preliminary formalities are gone through and the trial begins. Margot is questioned on oath respecting her former life. She replies that she was born in the town of Beaune, in the Gastenois—that for many a year she had led a vagabond and an immoral life, "sometimes in one town, sometimes in another," settling eventually in the Rue Froidmantel. We may add what was elicited bit by bit in the course of the trial, that during the latter portion of her career, the professions of sorceress, quack, and not improbably poisoner, had been conjoined to that of keeper of a house of dubious repute. Concerning the bewitchment of Planete and his wife she explains that the man was an old acquaintance, in the habit of frequenting her tavern with l'Estallée, his *amie*, up almost to the day of his marriage—an event which had taken place but a few weeks previous to the trial. "Immediately after the wedding," she goes on to relate, "I was informed by mutual friends that Agnesot was afflicted with a disease which caused her brain to exude through her eyes, nose, and mouth, and I was requested to do something for the poor woman. Then I bethought me of a certain secret which my mother had taught me in my youth, and I told these people that, with God to aid, I would soon relieve her. Taking a garland, composed of herbs which I had purchased on the eve of St. John last past, I went to the Rue des Fosses St. Germain. On the way I paused to gather a bunch of shepherd's-purse,* which I saw growing near the hostelry of Alençon, close by the Louvre, and which I twined in the garland as I went. Admitted to the bedside of Agnesot, I acquainted myself, as well as I could, with her malady. Then I said to her, '*Mon amie*, I gave you no garland for your wedding-day, but I give you one now, and I assure you that you could not wear a better one. It is a garland to unbewitch yourself, or any other person upon whom a

* The weed named was a noted ingredient in witch preparations. Aware of this, Margot endeavoured to give its appearance in her garland the seeming of accident.

spell has been laid.' So saying, I twined the garland round her head, outside her cap. Then I repeated three *paters*, and as many *aves*, and crossed her in the name of the Trinity. Afterwards I said, 'Twice have I cast a blight upon you, and thrice do I remove it, in the name of the Trinity!'" The last sentence was a damning admission.

Concerning Hainsellin, she told that some days preceding her visit to his wife he had called at her tavern to request assistance for himself, who was then suffering from "fevers," and that, for the sake of old acquaintance, she had furnished him with a charm composed of shepherd's-purse, wrapt up in a white rag, which she directed him to carry on his person, promising that it would secure his recovery within eleven days.

To further questions she replied that she was totally ignorant of the art of witchcraft. When reminded of an admission made by her during the examination preceding her committal for trial, she denied, in the strongest manner, having ever said that she knew Agnesot to be spell-bound, or having made any remark at all concerning her, save that, within three or four days of putting on the wreath, a notable change would take place in her health.

Having heard all that Margot thought fit to state, the judges consulted thereupon. Then, "duly considering her former life, the contradictions between her various statements, the suspicious herbs found in her possession, the absurdity of a person pretending to reverse a spell who did not know how to impose it, and the extraordinary admission contained in her version of the formula which she had used when placing the garland on the head of Agnesot—they decided that, in the interests of truth and justice, it was necessary to put her to the question."

The last paragraph, which we have borrowed pretty exactly from the record, reads very legal and logical. But, we beg to assure our readers that it meant absolutely nothing. We have gone over nearly a hundred reports of trials which took place at the Châtelet about this period, without finding a single instance in which resort was not had to the question.

Margot was put to the question forthwith, "on the little bed and the great one," but not another word could be drawn from her. She was then released, chafed, as usual, in the kitchen, and then relegated to her cell. So far she had reason to consider herself safe. There was no decisive evidence against her. She thought she could trust her accomplice to keep silence, and the old sinner had not the smallest doubt concerning her own firmness.

On Monday, August the 1st, the court reassembled. There were present six members, two of whom had not appeared at the former sitting. This time l'Estallée was produced for examination, and with her several dumb but rather dangerous witnesses, consisting of one or two dried herbs, a piece of moss, and a lock of hair, which had been found in her box. She, too, was required to give an account of her former life in the first instance. The moss, she stated, had been given her as a

souvenir by a former paramour, an English squire, who had gathered it with his own hands by the brink of a well where, according to tradition, a virgin had been beheaded. It was supposed to contain certain mystic virtues, and in return therefor she had given the squire a lock of her hair, for which scarcely as much could be said. One would have thought that such a token was hardly of the kind to pass between people like these; but such were the good old times.

Concerning Hainsellin, l'Estallée was sufficiently diffuse. She declared without the smallest reserve, or regard for womanly or legal decorum, and to the very beards of those "most potent, grave, and reverend signiors," that she had loved, still loved, and would continue to love him better than any man in the world, and, as she added with vehement passion, "better than any man that ever could be born into the world." The tuft of hair was his. Once on a time when he was leaving her, as she thought, far too soon, she tried to arrest him in a playful way. She seized his hood by one of the corners: he pulled against her, and thus the thing was torn off, and with it these hairs. He escaped for the time; but she wrapped up the hairs in the fragment of red cloth, and put the packet away among the things which she valued most.

She denied that she had ever gathered any herbs for magical purposes, or that she had ever uttered a threat concerning Hainsellin. She admitted that his marriage had grieved her exceedingly—more, far more, than anything that had ever before befallen her. And she admitted having said that he would have reason to rue the day—not as a threat, but because she knew full well that never, never more would he find any woman in this world to sacrifice herself for him as she had done. This was all that she had to say, and she was sent back to her cell.

The court was by this time increased to eleven—the five fresh members probably having been all attracted to the Châtelet by the unusual interest which the trial began to assume. A good deal of discussion among the judges followed the departure of Marion. Its very length shows that it was not altogether unfavourable to her. In the end it was decided that she, too, should be put to the torture, but not until Margot had been subjected thereto a second time. The crone therefore was summoned, and stretched on the rack. But the stern persuasions of the small bed and the great one had not the smallest effect on her obstinacy. So ended the doings of the day.

There was no court on Tuesday; but on Wednesday, the 3rd of August, its members assembled to the number of seven, and Marion was led before it. The proceedings opened with a little "scene." When the principal torturer, Oudin de Rochefort, seized the woman to prepare her for the iron couch, she burst from his grasp, and treated the worshipful magistrates to not a little of her mind. She warned them, with suitable gestures and interjections, to "mind what they were about in dealing thus with a woman of good fame." She declared, with deep earnestness, that she was entirely ignorant of the charges brought against

her. And she closed as neat an oration as was ever delivered under such circumstances, with an appeal to the Court of Parliament.

Such an appeal, even from such lips, was not to be disregarded. The work of torture was suspended, and notice of the appeal was transmitted to the body concerned, which, as it happened, was sitting at that moment. The message received prompt attention, and the messengers—the honourable and learned Master Pierre Lesclot, and the merely learned Master Guillaume Porel—both members of the Court of Parliament, as well as of the Court of the Châtelet—were sent back on the instant, with full powers to decide as to the validity of the appeal. So quickly was all this done, that the examination was resumed and carried through the remainder of the stage that same day. Clearly old French law had not yet put on those tedious forms of which Hamlet complains so bitterly.

Her appeal being disallowed, Marion was placed on the rack—but no further confession could be drawn from her. She was then removed, and Margot was brought up from the Grièche, and tortured for the third time. The old tavern-keeper, however, proved no more yielding than heretofore, and the court adjourned.

The next day l'Estallée was ordered to be questioned by water. This torture was much the same in 1390 as when it was witnessed by Evelyn, in the same place, in 1651. Here, according to the diarist of Say's Court, the wrists of the malefactor were bound with a strong rope, or small cable, to an iron ring in the wall, about four feet from the floor. Then his feet were fastened with another cable "about five foot farther than his utmost length, to another ring on the floor of the room. Thus suspended, yet lying but aslant, they slid an horse of wood under the rope that bound his feet, which so exceedingly stiffened it, as served the fellow's joints in miserable sort, drawing him out at length in an extraordinary manner, he having only a pair of linen drawers on his naked body. Then they questioned, which not confessing, they put a higher horse under the rope, to increase the torture and extension. In this agony, confessing nothing, the executioner with a horn—just such as they drench horses with—stuck the end of it into his mouth, and poured the quantity of two buckets of water down his throat and over him, which so prodigiously swelled him, as would have pitied and affrighted any one to see. . . . It represented to me the intolerable sufferings which our Blessed Saviour must needs undergo when His body was hanging with all its weight upon the Cross." The torture thus faithfully described was so terrible that few ever endured it beyond the first stage, and so it happened in this instance. Before a single drop of water could be poured upon her Marion was vanquished by her sufferings, and entreated to be released, promising to tell all. Her desire was complied with. "Then," writes the greffier, with nauseous affectation of mildness, "without the slightest constraint of the gehenne"—the appropriate name by which judicial torture was known—"she confessed all that she had ever practised of philtre or witchcraft."

Four months, or thereabouts, before, she and Marion la Dayme, a Fleming, and a daughter of sin like herself, "being together drinking and discoursing of their lovers," she, l'Estallée, held forth in praise of Hainsellin as the dearest, tenderest, most loveable sweetheart in the world. La Dayme was equally warm in eulogising one Jehan de Savoy, who held the honourable post of tailor to the Duchess of Touraine. As thus they conversed, the Fleming communicated a secret whereby a lover might be made more loving. The greffier has given it at full length, and, like other such secrets, it is perfectly vile and disgusting. But l'Estallée was a daughter of sin, and besides infatuated to insanity with Hainsellin. She therefore put it immediately in practice, though with the utmost fairness, since she applied it to herself also. Thus she gave good proof of the excess of passion that possessed her—by desiring to render it still more excessive. The utter worthlessness of the stuff was soon apparent. In a day or two it came to her knowledge that Hainsellin was affianced to another; and worse still, that the wedding-day was at hand. Then she hastened to la Barre—the prime confidante of this, the amour of her life—in a state of frenzy. The hag attempted to soothe her with old saws—dwelling especially on one which said that no good ever came of a marriage between two ribalds,* from which it would seem that Hainsellin had promised to wed his *amie*. As usual, wise saw failed to curb wild passion, and the tavern-keeper' was compelled to resort to another device. Binding the furious woman by oath on oath—never to breathe a syllable of the secret about to be disclosed, she whispered that she was well acquainted with an art greatly dreaded in those strange times. She went on to mutter that she was willing to exercise it in Marion's favour, somewhat in pity, but more in friendship, and, as it proved, a little for reward. Before, however, proceeding to such an extremity, Margot advised her client to try a mode of recalling truant lovers to their allegiance, which, as she asseverated, she had never known to fail. It consisted of a powder, absurdly composed, part of which was to be mixed with wine, and part wrapt up in a down pillow. Of the wine the lovers were to partake. As to the pillow, it was to be reserved for Hainsellin's use alone, for the touch of a female cheek would quite dispel its virtues. L'Estallée observed the directions very exactly. And Hainsellin gave her full opportunity: for, with unutterable meanness, this consummate sneak kept up his acquaintance with the ribald to the very last. "But," sighed the impassioned girl, "this philtre proved as useless as the other. I saw very clearly that Hainsellin loved just as ever, and not a particle more fondly."

Then l'Estallée went on to speak of the wreath—or rather wreaths, for there had been two. Visiting the market on the eve of St. John to purchase some roses *d'oultre mer*, and some other flowers, "wherewith to decorate her person, as was the custom of young women at that season," she bought, among the rest, a bunch of that weed of dark repute, shep-

* "Peu de gents ont espousé des amies, qui ne s'en soyent repentis."—*Montaigne*.

herd's-purse. On her return from the market she called, as usual, at the tavern. Then Margot observed the shepherd's-purse, and said that, by its means, she could work in such form as should cause Hainsellin to abandon the wife he was about to wed, and return to Marion. The weed we need hardly say at once changed hands, and a bargain was struck. The beldame promised to weave the shepherd's-purse into two garlands, one for the bridegroom and the other for the bride, which would certainly effect the purpose which l'Estallée had so much at heart.

At last arrived the week preceding Hainsellin's wedding. It was fixed for the Sunday, and on the Thursday or Friday before, she could not well remember which, Marion called on her friend. Margot bade her hope on, repeated her promise respecting the garlands, renewed the oaths to seceresy of the unhappy ribald, and imposed another to the effect that she would bring as many customers as she could to the tavern. Then she whispered that the garlands would be ready on the Sunday, when Marion would receive them, along with ample directions for their use.

Here, as often in the course of this report, the dull, dry greffier becomes a most attractive story teller. It is unintentionally indeed; he merely gives the more important items of the evidence in the usual matter-of-fact style of such people. But the details, like all those into which human feeling enters deeply, possess an interest of their own which needs no aid from the artifices of style.

The confession went on to relate—how on the morning of the Sunday, when her *amie* was to wed, Marion rose early—how, sitting sadly by her lattice, she saw Hainsellin pass and saluted him—how, when the marriage hour drew nigh, she felt constrained to go and witness the procession on its way to church—how she followed it thither, and remained, with what feeling we shall not attempt to guess, until the ceremony was over—how, when it was over, she stepped forward before the company, with that stoicism which intensest passion can so strangely assume, and saluted the pair, “*bien et doucement*,”—how afterwards she accompanied the party back to the hostelry of Alençon, where it was to spend the day in revelry—and how, quitting it at the door of the hostelry, she returned to her lonely chamber.

To Marion that day was emphatically the day of darkness which, according to old-world superstition, everybody is compelled to undergo at least once in life. A miserable day, a terrible day, a day of impotent fury, hopeless sorrow, and withering remorse, every one of whose incidents burns its impression deep into the memory.

In her chamber, l'Estalée remained for hours—brooding over guilty woes, and writhing under the lashes of the Furies. There, in the very focus of human suffering, she sat, the realisation of the picture so powerfully painted in the *Giaour*—

Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around her flame, within her death.

“Two hours after midday” she bethought her of the promise of la

Barre, and hurried to the Rue Froidmantel, where she conducted herself as one possessed—wringing her hands, gesturing wildly, rending her hair and her garments, and sending forth fierce complaints which were not altogether without foundation. From the evidence it appears that Hainsellin dealt with her as such scoundrels deal with such women. He had used her money as unscrupulously as her affections. He was even indebted to her for his life. In a dangerous illness, wherein he had no one else to look to and no other shelter for his head, she had conveyed him to her lodging and nursed him herself carefully and tenderly back to health. Poor l'Estallée! wicked she was, and immoral in the extreme, but still thoroughly devoted and self-sacrificing—excellent in that which makes the most excellent quality of woman—who does not pity her?

Having subsided into something like composure, Marion was again sworn to secrecy by the beldame, and the garlands were produced. "Holding them in her left hand," narrated the unfortunate, "she crossed them with her right, while she muttered over them some words too low for me to hear. Then she handed them to me with these directions—'Go to the hostelry where the marriage feast is held, and when you see the married couple join in the dance, make some excuse—such as stooping to tie your shoe, or to pick up something you have dropped—which will enable you to place the garlands in their way without exciting attention. If you so manage that they shall tread upon them, I promise you that your wish shall be accomplished.'"

Here, as Marion asserted, she was seized with a scruple. She, whose life was one round of mortal sin, actually shrank from imperilling her precious soul by following the instructions of the ogress. That the scruple was real we do not doubt; over and over again have we witnessed the like. But when Margot answered her that the garlands were, and would remain, perfectly harmless to every one but the bridegroom and the bride, her scruples evaporated, and she consented to go through with the sorcery.

Concealing the things beneath her dress, Marion hastened to the festive scene. There she found the company footing it with plebeian vigour. And there, thanks to the easy manners of the period, she found no difficulty in joining the dance—having a partner whom the greffier has not forgotten to describe with execrations of precision as one-eyed Thomas, a familiar servant of the Duke of Touraine. And here we must pause to protest against that habit peculiar to the law, which will persist in taking advantage of the trial of a thorough-paced scoundrel to consign to immortality all the more unpleasant peculiarities of respectable people.

In the course of the evening, Marion managed to deposit her garlands. Having no further business there, she went home to supper; and after supper she hastened to the tavern to report progress, and be again assured of success.

The Monday and Tuesday following "the unfortunate" spent in an excursion to Montmartre. There some gossip respecting the newly married led her to think that the spell had failed. She returned, therefore,

to Paris exceedingly downcast, to be reassured by a report—a true one, as it happened—that bride and bridegroom were ill, the latter alarmingly. This, with the addition of a conversation in which the ogress continued to laud her nostrums and to encourage the hopes of her dupe, was the end of this unparalleled confession.

Margot was confronted with Marion, whose depositions were read over to her. To everything contained therein the crone gave the most unqualified contradiction. "And saying and affirming upon her oath that the deponent had lied most maliciously and foully, *she challenged the said Marion to single combat, and threw down her gage.*"

Here it may be remarked that the peculiar form of trial, termed by battle, was then in full swing. Not quite four years before, all Paris had witnessed the celebrated duel between Carouge and Legris; and though it was usual for women who challenged, or accepted challenge, to appear in the lists by deputy, they were at full liberty, as many instances show, to refuse championship, and do battle in person.*

In this instance the duel was at once refused. Then Margot attempted to prove an *alibi* with respect to the events which told most heavily against her, but managed merely to elicit further proof thereof. This, however, was not yet considered convincing; and, to procure what was needed, it was determined to torture both the prisoners once more. They began with Marion, who adhered to her last confession. She, therefore, was soon released from the rack, which closed the proceedings for that day.

On Saturday the prisoners were re-examined. Marion confirmed her confession, and attributed her early denials to the oaths which the ogress had induced her to take, and also to the persuasions of the latter during their confinement together. She added, that her tortured and weakened limbs had given her good cause to regret her obstinacy.

Margot was now ordered to be questioned by water; and here, like her predecessor, she gave way before a single drop of the fluid could be employed. Her confession was as ample as could be desired; it was in great part a recapitulation of that of l'Estallée. What was new therein referred exclusively to matters of sorcery, and ran as follows:—"When about to deliver the garland to Marion, she described herself as calling up the demon in these words: "Enemy, I conjure thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come hither to me!" "Then," said she, "I made a third and smaller garland, which I threw on a bench behind me. Immediately afterwards, when I was about to cross the larger garland, I saw, at my elbow, an enemy of the form and fashion of the enemies who appear in the passion plays, with the exception, that this one had no horns. He asked what I wanted with him. I replied, 'I give you yonder garland on condition that you plague Hainsellin and his wife in such a way that Marion shall

* See THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE for December 1870, p. 737.

have full reparation for the wrongs they have done her.' Then the enemy departed, bearing with him the little garland. I saw him fly out through a window that was open in the chamber with a noise like a whirlwind, and I was much afraid."

Being questioned still further of the invocation of fiends—a matter concerning which the judges displayed an extremely puerile curiosity—she replied by relating a circumstance which had occurred some twenty-four years before. "Being in the fields under Montmartre, with a daughter of sin like myself, we began to tell of our lovers. Then this girl, who was a Fleming, but whose name I have forgotten, taught me how to invoke the devil. And then and there did I invoke him as she instructed, crying out, 'Devil, guard and aid me and my lover (whom I named), so that he may never love any but myself!' When I had spoken, somebody, whom I could not see, replied, and in my terror I ran and hid myself in a little hut that we had constructed with turf and brambles."

Concerning the Satanic portion of the old tavern-keeper's confession, it is but right to remark that her judges had evidently made up their minds that something of the kind must have occurred, and that they were as evidently determined to tear that something from her lips, even though they should rack her asunder in the process. The victim of her own cunning and sordidness saw clearly that her fate was decided, and, to preserve her wretched limbs from unnecessary suffering, she concocted the stories whose outlines we have given.

On Sunday, Margot was re-examined alone; and on Monday, in company with Marion. She was found to adhere steadily to her confession; nor did her companion recall aught that she had said.

Finally, on Thursday, the 9th of August, the pair were brought up for judgment. The court was a full one, numbering full twenty members. They were unanimous in condemning la Barre to be exposed in the pillory, and then burnt as a witch. With respect to l'Estallée, there was a difference of opinion. Five of her judges would fain have substituted banishment for the fatal penalty; but, as three-fourths of the assembled sages voted for death, the merciful intentions of the minority were frustrated. The sentence was executed on the instant. Years had yet to elapse before the exertions of a great penitent, who in his day had been a mighty sinner, Pierre Craon, could succeed in procuring for criminals condemned to death the solace offered by religion. The two, therefore, were hurried from the judgment-hall to the pillory, and thence to the stake and their long account—

Unhousel'd, unanointed, unanel'd :
No reckoning made,
With all their imperfections on their head.

As to Hainsellin Planete, who repaid the sacrifices and rid himself of the importunities of a devoted mistress by doing her to death, no further mention is made of him.

Christopher Marlowe.

As one of the great forerunners of the most glorious era in English literature, Christopher Marlowe would be deserving of recognition and consideration if from that circumstance alone. When this scholar of Cambridge University first began to sing those numbers which were afterwards to make him justly distinguished, the rich full song of old Dan Chaucer had well nigh died away, or at least was almost exclusively cherished by those whose tastes and pursuits were of a purely literary character. Shakspeare, though living, had as yet given no intimation of that majestic strength of wing which he afterwards attained. The speculation may, we believe, be accepted as indubitably correct, that the fame of the work of Marlowe had reached his ear before he attempted the writing of tragedy; but the death of the subject of this article occurred before the production of most of those dramas—certainly the ripest of them—which are now associated with the name of the sublime poet of Stratford. That the author of *Hamlet* was more than acquainted with Marlowe's name is an assured fact, not only because the ruling literary spirit of that age, Ben Jonson, had passed upon him a high encomium, but for the reason that Shakspeare himself made quotations of certain expressions in his plays. It must be admitted that of all the poets immediately introductory to the Elizabethan period, Marlowe exhibited the largest promise, and developed the highest genius. In truth, to read his works and remember at the same time that the writer had "shuffled off this mortal coil" at the age of twenty-nine, we are struck not only with the wondrous fulness of his mind, but the wealth of his intellectual and poetic gifts. To be the author, when a mere youth, of several plays which are worthy of being associated with those of the world's greatest dramatist may well entitle him to reverential regard. But, in addition to the claim he has upon us as the principal link between a bygone and a coming age, there is another light in which Marlowe may be viewed, and honour put upon his name. His "mighty line" has been referred to again and again by historians and critics since it first earned the praise of that learned brother of the dramatic craft already cited; but as a well-ascertained matter it was the only "line" of blank verse warranting the name till his immediate successors raised the art of dramatic poetry to its most exalted height. Halting and defective to the last degree as was the blank verse in vogue at the period when Marlowe first began to write, he speedily showed it to be capable of a perfection which had never yet been dreamt of. His verse is frequently noticeable for its dignity and impressiveness, and but very rarely for its

weakness and gracelessness. Occasionally, as with most writers, he leaves the impression that he has not fully grasped his subject before committing himself to its treatment, and his work loses in proportion and symmetry; but, upon the whole, his dramas are, to an exceedingly small degree only, open to the objection of crudity and meanness. He can tread the stage as a king, when the monarch's step is required.

A benignant face looks out upon us as we contemplate the countenance of this early dramatist. He seems invested with a calm which is in strange keeping with his brief and tragic career. Eyes which beam softly as those of woman shine beneath a noble expanse of brow, and the whole face is full of conscious power and repose. Yet he spent his time, as we are informed, between inditing dramas and fighting in pothouses—at least such are the two salient facts preserved for posterity in his meagre biography. But we cannot help thinking that great injustice is done to him from the fact that so few details of his life are known. While his sanguine temperament, quick passions, and probable devotion to the bottle at sundry seasons, would be sufficient to account for the miserable quarrel which led to his untimely death, there may, after all, have been a substratum of nobility of heart and life for which he has received no credit. It is impossible to believe, even without pinning our faith to a positive reading of character by physiognomical signs, which we should refuse to do, after studying the man's work, generous impulses, and eloquent features, that he could have been the mere sensualist he has been sometimes described, a being in whom the brute ever held the dominant sway. There is no evidence whatever that he was irretrievably depraved, but much indirect, yet strong, evidence to the contrary. Distinguished at a very early age for his learning, and the author of so much ripe work at a period when most men only begin to take the pen in hand, it is a matter of sheer incompatibility that he could have served at the shrine of Bacchus and that of the drama with equal fervour. A temporary aberration might now and then have seized him, which in fact is thus duly recorded, when the madness of intoxication filled the brain: a thing not very strange in a time when the veins of literary men generally were too often heated by the blood of the grape. Marlowe unquestionably has the reputation of having been both a free and evil liver; but in dealing with these accusations, and weighing them with candour, it must not be forgotten that by far the major part of them were preferred by his personal enemies. To support him in his theory as regards the peculiar manifestations of genius at the commencement of the period of the Renaissance, M. Taine has adopted the worst of the charges made against the dramatist, and in the most wholesale manner. From these charges he has ably instituted a comparison between the character of the man and his works. The comparison is very ingenious, and somewhat subtle; but inasmuch as it is not necessarily, but only problematically, true, it must stand for little more than a mere curiosity of criticism. The tendency to discover the influence of personal idiosyncrasy and psychological impressions left upon the works

of English authors, is one that is very strong in M. Taine, and it is too frequently seen carried to excess. His criticism on Marlowe, summed up into one sentence—if we may exercise the hardihood of thus summarily dealing with it—is to the following effect: He was a wild, fiery spirit, utterly incapable of self government, or of being governed by anybody else; and his work reflects the bombast, the recklessness, and the violence of his own nature. To a great extent this may be true of Marlowe, but it must not be accepted as exhaustive of either side of the question. Just as there is a great deal more in his writings than M. Taine has indicated, so also there may have been a great deal more in the man than those salient characteristics which, when observed at all anywhere, are beheld in very glaring prominence. He had a tolerable endowment of noisy vice, but he may also have possessed a sufficient amount of quiet virtue. That is the point we care to contend for at the present moment; and as something more must be said touching Marlowe's character and religious views at a later stage, we shall halt as regards the matter at this juncture.

Born exactly two months before Shakspeare, Marlowe first looked out upon the world at Canterbury on February 26, 1564. In that most attractive of cathedral cities his father resided, pursuing, according to some assurances that we have, the humble trade of a shoemaker. Other authorities, however, whose evidence is more worthy to be relied upon, describe him as the clerk of St. Maries. Christopher was one of five children, the others being two sons and two daughters. It is just possible that the father's employment in connection with the church was of some assistance to him in procuring education for his children, in addition to the other advantages which residence in a cathedral city affords in this respect. Several centuries ago the latter consideration was one of much importance, as a school was a necessary adjunct to the cathedral. Marlowe, too, may also have found friends amongst the clergy of Canterbury, who divined in him more than ordinary intelligence, and who determined to assist in its cultivation accordingly. But, be that as it may, he was not one to lose the natural advantages amidst which he was placed. He had within reach all the pleasures of the country life respecting which the poets sing so freely, and at the same time there were grand architectural beauties constantly in view which could not fail to leave upon his soul impressions of awe and grandeur. There are certain points in connection with Marlowe's life at Canterbury which remain in a state of dubiousness even to this day, notwithstanding the efforts of Dyce, Cunningham, and others to elucidate them. The first-named biographer quotes an extract from the Treasurer's accounts of the King's School which proves that Marlowe was a scholar from Michaelmas, 1578, to Michaelmas, 1579. To demonstrate the difficulties of constructing history, or of tracing it, however, it is stated that the accounts themselves for the greater part of this very year named and for the preceding and subsequent years are all missing. It is somewhat cheering, nevertheless, amidst this Sahara of unascertained and unascertainable knowledge, to come upon the basis of

positive assurance that our dramatist was entered at Benet (Corpus Christi) College, Cambridge, in the year 1580; that is, when he was sixteen years of age. Because of what might be simply an imperfect entry in the College books, as Col. Cunningham points out (and it is to this compiler we are principally indebted for our biographical facts), the conclusion has been hastily arrived at that Marlowe missed gaining one of the two scholarships which attached to the school at Canterbury in which he was educated. The world cares little for such matters as this now; the fame of the scholar is decreed, and the silence of his detractors is as utter and complete as oblivion can make it. But it is interesting to note that when only just over seventeen years of age Marlowe matriculated as pensioner of his College; that two years later he proceeded B.A.; and that in 1587 he commenced M.A. Nash and Greene were the only two of his contemporaries at Cambridge who afterwards attained to literary laurels. It is suggested, and with a reasonable amount of plausibility, that Marlowe spent an interregnum of some two or three years, of which we have no account, in travelling abroad, and that possibly he joined the forces of Leicester and Sidney engaged in the wars of the Low Countries. He has numerous references in his works which might support this theory. But whether travelling, fighting, or remaining at home, he must have cultivated his affection towards literature, and have been laying in at this time those stores of information which for a brief span only he was afterwards to illuminate by the sun of his genius. Collier, indeed, asserts that both parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* had been publicly performed in London in the year 1587, which was the date at which, as we have seen, Marlowe commenced M.A. This fact alone will serve to show the amazing strength of his intellectual nature. That one who had barely attained his majority should write two such tragedies—which, with all their faults, possess an actuality of power and pathos truly surprising—seems almost incredible. The fact might well excite doubt were it not corroborated by the still more extraordinary one that in six years (or little more) from this very time, the brain was stilled for ever which had conceived *Dr. Faustus* and revelled in the Elegies of Ovid. Some idea of the pleasant amenities indulged in by literary men of the olden time may be gathered from the tirade of abuse which was indirectly heaped upon the head of Marlowe by Nash in a preface to a work by Greene, his bosom friend. The incensed and probably jealous Nash refers to “those idiot art masters who intrude themselves to our ears as the alchemists of eloquence, who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) think to outbrave better pens by the swelling bombast of braggart blank verse;” and the writer also chastises “those who commit the digestion of their cholerick incumbrances to the spacious volubility of a drumming decasyllabon.” From all which it will be perceived that Nash exhibits a tavern-like ability and freedom in the use of hard adjectives, but also that the invective in which they are imbedded is not really much in advance of the eloquence of the tavern as regards real powers of satire. As no work has yet been written which is abso-

lutely perfect, so there was just a little foundation afforded by the weaknesses of Marlowe's style for the onslaughts of those who, if they could never hope to rival him, had the refuge always made use of by ignoble minds—that of vituperation and vilification. There can be little question that Nash and others must have been startled by the potency of the new writer, and alarmed at the prospect that their own names must suffer a speedy eclipse in the splendour of the more powerful aspirant; and from *their* point of view it was all-important that the new comer should be pierced by their arrows in every joint of his armour which could be discovered assailable. Accordingly, it was hoped to damage Marlowe irretrievably, because his common characters were made occasionally to talk the language of the gods; his bombast afforded excellent footing as a ladder wherewith to drag him down from the height of fame to which he had already reached. He was so great, that he had been able to throw away all the traditional notions of his art and to strike out upon an original path; he had dared to be true to a new light which he felt that he possessed; and whenever a man thus resolves of course he gains as many enemies as friends—the former generally regarding him with the keener interest of the two. But genius was never yet killed by ridicule; the man sometimes may be, but his work never. The world teems with instances where what is now hailed as the great outcome of great minds was once assailed with a malignity which nothing could daunt, and a persistency which seemed to forebode destruction; but the work survives, and the assailants, where are they? The very writings of Marlowe which were so ruthlessly attacked by his contemporaries are now universally regarded with admiration as the first springings forth of that rill of dramatic literature which afterwards gathered strength and became a broad and mighty river.

Hallam has left us an opinion of *Tamburlaine the Great*, the tragedy which called forth the animadversions of Nash, which may fitly be referred to here. Considering the calm balance of mind usually preserved by that careful and discriminating writer, the praise accorded to Marlowe's early work is indeed lofty, though, as we hope presently to see, not too lofty when the merits of the tragedy are fully considered. He says: "This play has more spirit and poetry than any which, upon clear grounds, can be shown to have preceded it. We find also more action on the stage, a shorter and more dramatic dialogue, a more figurative style, with a far more varied and skilful versification. If Marlowe did not re-establish blank verse, which is difficult to prove, he gave it at least a variety of cadence and an easy adaptation of the rhythm to the sense, by which it easily became in his hands the finest instrument that the tragic poet has ever employed for his purpose, less restricted than that of the Italians, and falling occasionally almost into prose; lines of fourteen syllables being very common in all our old dramatists, but regular and harmonious at other times, as the most accurate ear could require." The *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*, which was Marlowe's

next play, avoided some of the faults observable in its predecessor, partly owing to the fact that the author himself had doubtless become conscious that his style must not be allowed to degenerate into rant, and partly because the nature of the subject itself forbade the use of so extravagant a diction. It is said—and there is no reason, judging from internal evidence, for thinking the supposition is incorrect—that a number of interpolations have been made in the text of *Faustus* for which Marlowe is not responsible, and which are in nowise germane to his genius. Of his other dramatic works more remains still to be said, as they are dealt with in their proper order; but a passing reference may be made to the effect produced upon the writers of his own day by the beautiful poem on the old but never wearisome legend of the loves of *Hero and Leander*. So popular was this composition that the Water Poet and his brother scullers upon the Thames used to sweeten their toil by singing or reciting favourite passages from it. And we have few richer treasures of its kind to linger lovingly over now.

But the thread of our biographical narrative is in danger of being interrupted. What had become of the dramatist during the construction of these plays which we have mentioned, and others which we must yet enumerate? The only facts of a definite nature in his personal history to be relied upon are, first, that he tried his fortune upon the stage, where he had no long run; and, secondly, that his reputation was of a most objectionable description: then, finally, the violent end of a violent life, of which we have spoken, must not be forgotten. Being in a tavern at Deptford, carousing with individuals of the lowest strata of society, he received an insult which his choleric temper could ill brook. In endeavouring to avenge it, by some chance his own weapon was turned against himself in the scuffle, and he received a mortal wound. Whether the facts be exactly as stated or no, he undoubtedly perished in this same brawl; but those who profess to apportion the blame and fix a stigma on Marlowe, only do so upon posthumous evidence said to have been based upon contemporary statements—which statements, nevertheless, were made, as already seen, by persons inimical to the dramatist. So much for the tragedy of Marlowe's own life. Short as it was, it seems to have been passed amidst a great deal of physical excitement, not unmingled with excess. But that the last few years of his life were a prolonged orgie, is an assertion which may be at once dismissed as base and unfounded. Periods of calm and leisure were essential to his genius; and these periods must have been obtained, since the monuments which were the result of them are still existing. The eulogy passed upon Marlowe by his illustrious contemporary dramatist was not earned without effort, we may be sure; and when it is remembered that those who traduced him hated him most of all on religious grounds, we should be doubly cautious in the reception of statements which, if believed, would make him a Faust and a Mephistopheles combined.

Perhaps the most striking quality observable in Marlowe is his breadth.

Whatever defects may be alleged against his execution, and however faulty may be his style, his conceptions are gigantic. He revels in his strength like a giant. He reminds us in his wildness and grandeur of those heights of the Brocken, where Faust is supposed to have sealed his compact with the Evil One. Tempestuous to a degree, he is, as compared with the other writers of his age, what the surging and ever restless ocean is to the still pool. Take up any of his works, and they will be found distinguished by a uniform greatness of conception. The imagination from which they proceeded is lofty, strong, and impassioned. Excrescences cannot hide his greatness; the mountain summit is not always obscured by black absorbing clouds. A free and daring spirit is stamped upon all that he has done: a spirit that knew no fear of man, and, it is to be assumed, felt little awe of God. His works are the most unrestrained exhibition of power of which we have any knowledge. Other dramatists may have exhibited the same recklessness, but then they have not possessed the same strength. As regards Shakspeare, note here one of those points in which he is the king of the poets. There was the same power as in Marlowe, but he also possessed a quietude which gives us an idea of what we should call the unexpended forces of his nature. To draw an analogy from the physical world around us, and apply it to Shakspeare, we should say he was equally at home in painting the flower as in wielding the earthquake. He was, at pleasure, self-infused with the spirit of a child, or the iron will of a Julius Cæsar. It is just this capacity of instituting a close relation between himself and any unit of humanity whatsoever, that separates him from the rest of his kind. Marlowe was great and sublime, but not from this all-enfolding point of view. His greatness was a plain and palpable one, and not a suggestive greatness. He has given us royal spirits, royally conceived; but we ask in vain for his Falstaffs, his Bardolphs, his Juliets, and his Portias. What types he has drawn are as true and accurate (not all, but most of them) as those of his great successor; and perhaps we are a little unjust in demanding from him more when we consider the brief span of his existence. It is possible that had his life been prolonged we should have received from him work worthy of being compared with much of Shakspeare's own. There was in him the outline of a transcendent genius, but the opportunity failed him of filling up its wonderful proportions.

Another distinguishing peculiarity of this dramatist is his power over the passions. *Dr. Faustus* is sufficient evidence of the gift he possessed in this respect. Mark the alternations of feeling in the mind of the leading character, and see how boldly they are drawn—whilst at the end the absorbing sentiment of the reader is one of admiration, not unmingled with sorrow, for Faustus, even in the great climax of his fate. The same power is carried into several of the scenes in *Edueard the Second*—one especially being as pathetic a passage as can be discovered almost anywhere. And the passion is not the simulated passion of the writer of books, but of the reader of men. The counterfeit is not per-

ceptible here. It is genuine passion genuinely depicted. The whole vocabulary of grief seems to have been in Marlowe's possession. The hell of a miserable mind has been penetrated with deep and searching vision. Beneath the demoniacal fury which appears to utterly envelope many of his characters is to be seen a more complicated series of passions than would at first sight strike the beholder. The demon has but one element, but one feeling, but one plan of action; but the humanity which Marlowe has drawn has the real strife of elements. He shows the secret workings of good against evil, and *vice versâ*; and he has chosen for treatment men in whom the volcano of passion is for ever surging and emitting its mixed products of stones and lava. Marlowe is a superb Byron. Upon the nineteenth century poet has been superadded to the violence and the darkness of profound passion its true dignity. Marlowe is greater, more splendid in his rage and his denunciation, probably from the fact that his soul, though more unbelieving, had yet a larger sincerity than Byron's. Manfred appears a fearful individuality; but, if we come to look at him very closely, we shall find that he is a gentleman of whom we have very often heard before—the man who defies God and makes a great deal of noise about it; but who has not the true elements of a mighty personal being within himself. Very different is the Faustus of Marlowe. Many a man could become a Manfred; but Faustus is as rare a creation as Iago, while of a totally different type. So great is Marlowe's conception of this character, that he has not been able to do expressed justice to it. He has had glimpses of the veritable being himself, with all his enormous thoughts and desires, but has failed to reduce him altogether into shape. But, indistinct as he sometimes appears, the glimpses we do get of him fully attest what a magnificent being he is. And herein, we think, lies the difference between Marlowe's tragedy and Goethe's. The latter work is the history of a soul and something more. We are attracted partly by the paraphernalia of the drama, and not overwhelmed by the individual creation. In Marlowe's tragedy we see little but Faustus; but he is enough. He covers the canvas with his great and sombre presence, awful in the vastness of his wishes and the daring of his imagination. And this is but one of the characters which the dramatist has left us. Little inferior in vividness of drawing is the Jew of Malta, the predecessor of a still more notorious Jew, and therefore the more original. In all his conceptions Marlowe was never afraid of carrying the passions to their utmost height and fulness. It is the mark of the strong writer when he reaches this perfection. Irresolution and weakness have no place in characters which they mean to be the embodiments of human feeling: they know their ends and pursue them. It may be objected to Marlowe that the range of his vision is somewhat limited, looking to the number of his individual creations; but it is apparent to any one, nevertheless, that his capacity of representation of what he has set himself to depict knows little if any limitation. That he has not left a larger gallery of portraits behind him is not a reproach to his genius, but the result of the interference of the

ill-fated hand of Death; the painting of such of those as he has drawn is more distinct than Vandyke's and bolder than Rembrandt's.

Tamburlaine the Great is a drama in two parts, in which the writing is very unequal in strength. Charged occasionally with all the commanding eloquence which the dramatist well knew how to use, many of the scenes, taken in the bulk, are not worthy of his genius, but are disfigured by faults which we can only too clearly see it was but natural should lay him open to censure. The first part is introduced to the reader by a prologue in which Marlowe displays his contempt for the "jigging veins of rhyming mother wits, and such conceits as clownage keeps in pay," and he goes on to promise a very different class of entertainment from that which these same poor wits generally provided. We are inclined to be somewhat doubtful whether the promise will be redeemed when we find the King of Persia—from whom we should certainly have expected more exalted language—addressing his brother in these exceedingly commonplace terms in the very first lines of the play:—

Brother Cosroe, I find myself aggrieved,
Yet insufficient to express the same.

The drama soon moves on, fortunately, to more important matter and in the second scene we are presented with a very effective interview between Tamburlaine and his beautiful captive Zenocrate, the daughter of the Soldan of Egypt, in which the former unfolds his prophecies of the career which shall end by filling the earth with his dreaded name. The Persian Theridamas, who was afterwards persuaded to forsake his Sovereign through the persuasiveness of Tamburlaine, well describes the terror of the world in these lines,—

Tamburlaine ! A Scythian shepherd so embellish'd
With nature's pride and richest furniture !
His looks do menace Heaven, and dare the gods ;
His fiery eyes are fixed upon the earth,
As if he now devised some stratagem,
Or meant to pierce Avernus' darksome vaults,
To pull the triple-headed dog from hell.

Equally successful in love and war, the daring adventurer and warrior pursues his destiny. Resolution to obtain possession with him means instant fruition; and his hot and boundless ambition, which nothing mortal could satisfy, is graphically traced by the plastic pen of the narrator. The aspiring shepherd holds that a god is not half so glorious as a king; and in words which have been altered by Milton only to the extent of taking the nether regions instead of paradise for his fine declaration—Tamburlaine proceeds to say,—

I think the pleasure they enjoy in heaven
Cannot compare with kingly joys in earth.

It is more than probable that these, and the immediately succeeding lines in the drama, rang in the later bard's ears when he wrote that it was

Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

The insatiable lust of power, and its gradual absorption of the entire being, were never better depicted than in Marlowe's delineation of Tamburlaine. He is in every sense a great warrior, whose conceptions of campaigns and conquests are equalled by his prodigious executive ability. He declares that he has no room to entertain the thought of defeat; if he is moved to obtain the Persian crown, he attains his object with ease. What is in the grasp of man to accomplish shall be achieved by him, for he is penetrated with the sense of his superiority over mankind, and of his equality with the gods. His ideas, plans, and swift and whirlwind-like movements, and indomitable courage fully attest that he is no mere boaster, but one who will ride the age as its master and its monarch. The play is admirable for the manner in which this apotheosis is worked out, and Tamburlaine lifted out of the vulgar category of ordinary humanity. His secret passions are dissected with that psychological insight for which the dramatist is remarkable, and the mind, as well as the deeds, of the great scourge of Asia is laid bare to our gaze. With all its inflation and bombast, the play is very forcible, and in certain parts very beautiful. This passage, put into the mouth of the warrior himself, is large in thought, daring, and instinct with rugged and striking oratory:—

Now clear the triple region of the air,
And let the majesty of Heaven behold
Their scourge and terror tread on emperors.
Smile, stars, that reigned at my nativity,
And dim the brightness of your neighbour lamps!
Disdain to borrow light of Cynthia!
For I, the chiefest lamp of all the earth,
First rising in the East with mild aspect,
But fixed now in the meridian line,
Will send up fire to your turning spheres,
And cause the sun to borrow light of you.
My sword struck fire from his coat of steel,
Even in Bithynia, when I took this Turk;
As when a fiery exhalation,
Wrapt in the bowels of a freezing cloud,
Fighting for passage, makes the welkin crack,
And casts a flash of lightning to the earth:
But ere I march to wealthy Persia,
Or leave Damascus and the Egyptian fields,
As was the fame of Clymene's brain-sick son,
That almost bent the axle-tree of heaven,
So shall our swords, our lances, and our shot
Fill all the air with fiery meteors:
Then when the sky shall wax as red as blood,
It shall be said I made it red myself,
To make me think of nought but blood and war.

This is befitting declamation, loud and trumpet-tongued, to assign to the man who, on another occasion, uttered the following vigorous description of himself—

The god of war resigns his room to me,
Meaning to make me general of the world;

Jove, viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan,
Fearing my power should pull him from his throne.

The character foreshadowed in these lines is well sustained; the gigantic figure is never dwarfed, nor do his enormous passions ever exhibit the least inclination to satiety. He feasts his eyes upon the woes of Bajazet, who is borne about with him in a cage, and who has the double misfortune of seeing his conqueror march forth to victory after victory, kings falling before him as the tall blades of corn before the hurricane. The woes of the Emperor of the Turks and his faithful empress are related with much pathos, and their self-destruction completed in a scene of strong and natural emotion. At the opening of the second portion of the drama we find Tamburlaine in the zenith of his power and fame. The ever-victorious sovereign has discomfited the great Christian host under Sigismund, and there is nothing more left for him to do, except to enjoy the fruits of his victories. Yet, in the very next scene to that in which his greatest triumph is celebrated, we behold Tamburlaine miserable and dejected. Disease has seized upon the form of Zenocrate, his illustrious consort, and he who had boasted of his invincible might is powerless to arrest its progress. Graphically is the lesson indicated of the rapid succession of joy and despair for all humanity. The conqueror is at last conquered. The captor of one hundred kings watches the gradual advance of an insidious disease in helplessness and anguish. He sees that form, which, had it lived before the siege of Troy, "Helen had not been named in Homer's *Iliades*," wither and expire, and from that moment his sun of prosperity begins to set. He can, however, wreak his revenge for the loss of Zenocrate in one method, eminently suggestive of his imperious and cruel spirit, and he accordingly consumes with fire the city in which she died. The play moves on with real dramatic interest and energy. The enraged monarch teaches his sons the art of war, in which he would see them become like masters with himself, and because one of them, Calyphas by name, does not take kindly to the occupation of blood, the furious father stabs him to the heart. He makes his son's death the occasion for an outburst of wrath, in which he threatens unheard of horrors for the world. Being remonstrated with by the kings of Jerusalem, Syria, and Trebizond for his cruelty, Tamburlaine replies in the following strain, which is one of the most powerful pieces of rhetoric to be found in our author:—

Villains! these terrors and these tyrannies
I execute, enjoined me from above,
To scourge the pride of such as heaven abhors;
Nor am I made arch-monarch of the world,
Crowned and invested by the hand of Jove
For deeds of bounty and nobility:
But since I exercise a greater name,
The scourge of God and terror of the world,
I must apply myself to fit those terms,
In war, in blood, in death, in cruelty,

And plague such peasants as resist in me
The power of heaven's eternal majesty.

* * * * *
I will with engines never exercised,
Conquer, sack, and utterly consume
Your cities and your golden palaces,
And, with the flames that beat against the clouds,
Incense the heavens, and make the stars to melt,
As if they were the tears of Mahomet,
For hot consumption of his country's pride ;
And, till by vision, or by speech I hear
Immortal Jove say, "Cease, my Tamburlaine,"
I will persist a terror to the world,
Making the meteors (that, like armed men
Are seen to march upon the towers of heaven),
Run tilting round about the firmament,
And break their burning lances in the air
For honour of my wondrous victories.

The fact that these speeches of Tamburlaine's are disfigured occasionally by outrageous exaggerations and ranting eccentricities does not by any means destroy their effect, whilst they enjoy that great distinction of being the first really serious attempt to revolutionise contemporary blank verse.

Confessedly, however, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* must be regarded, in accordance with the general verdict, as the *chef-d'œuvre* of Marlowe. It has a strength and directness of purpose most distinctly traced in every scene, whilst the individuality of the leading character (a quality to which we have previously made some reference) is most striking and complete. It is a drama in which the most intense interest is evoked and sustained. The conception is so vivid, that the whole thing gives us the impression that it might have been written at one sitting. We know, of course, that this is impossible, but the illusion is only a so much stronger tribute to the powers of the writer. Faustus, whose personality has already come before us, may not appear altogether a desirable character, in the matter of detailed drawing and elaboration, but we should search well nigh in vain to discover a worthy rival to him in the gigantic force of his ruling ideas, and for the admirable manner in which his unappeasable craving for enjoyment has been delineated. In truth, he is almost appalling from his defiance of all the canons of humanity, and for those flights of an uncontrolled and unbridled imagination in which he indulges. Hazlitt well says of him, translating into excellent language what will be the thought of all readers of the tragedy—"Faustus, in his impatience to fulfil at once and for a moment, for a few short years, all the desires and conceptions of his soul, is willing to give in exchange his soul and body to the great enemy of mankind. Whatever he fancies becomes by this means present to his sense ; whatever he commands is done. He calls back time past, and anticipates the future ; the visions of antiquity pass before him. Babylon in all its glory, Paris, and Enone ; all the projects of philosophers, or creations of the poet, pay tribute at his feet ; all the delights of fortune,

of ambition, of pleasure, and of learning, are centred in his person; and from a short-lived dream of supreme felicity and drunken power, he sinks into an abyss of darkness and perdition. This is the alternative to which he submits; the bond which he signs with his blood! As the outline of the character is grand and daring, the execution is abrupt and fearful. The thoughts are vast and irregular, and the style halts and staggers under them. 'With uneasy steps, such footing found the sole of unblest feet.' There is a little fustian and incongruity of metaphor now and then, which is not very injurious to the subject." It is a curious fact with regard to this drama, that though written several years before his death, no edition of it was published during the lifetime of its author, while many of the editions now current present Marlowe's text very much mutilated. It may have been the fancied improvements of other hands which resulted in the introduction of those passages that are open to the charge of buffoonery. It is pointed out that there are three editions of the tragedy which were not known to Dyce, and Hazlitt deemed it highly probable that there might have been an earlier impression than any yet discovered. Under these circumstances it would not be safe to assume that the drama as we have received it stands as Marlowe left it; possessing as we do some knowledge of the quality of his powers, we ought not to bind ourselves to more than admiring as his work the grand and majestic conception in its bold and simple outline, and those passages of the play which bear upon them the impress of his perferid and tremendous genius. The hammer of Vulcan has certainly been employed to weld the joints of the armour in which Faustus is encased. The drama is no child's play, but one of terrible and engrossing import to all men. The lesson of the whole is current in lurid flames upon the surface as we proceed. The dramatist has drunk deep of ecstasies and visions, and made his work living with emotion. He rises to the character of Faustus more perfectly than does the modern artist. His passions and desires are more dramatically if not more poetically treated. The introduction of the Margaret of the later work into the earlier drama would have completely spoilt it. Given the Faust of Goethe, and Margaret does not seem inadequate as the height of earthly bliss for him, but Marlowe's Faustus is made of sterner stuff. He is cast in a larger mould, and when he demands beauty he must have presented to him Helen of Troy. Charles Lamb even, that gentle being, felt that there would have been an incompatibility between the real Faust and Margaret. Marlowe's hero experienced not the depth of the intellectual difficulties which beset Hamlet, or Goethe's Faust, but he had a more insatiable thirst of heart. Let us look a little at this oldest dramatic form in which the well-known story of Faust and his compact is presented. Marlowe, in the first act, depicts the learned Dr. Faustus in his study, and after much cogitation we find him delivering the sum of his thoughts in the opinion that "a sound magician is a demi-god," with a greater sovereignty than that of emperors and kings. But how to get this deity embodied in his own person? The daring idea is pursued with the aid of evil spirits who

arrive opportunely upon the scene. Intoxicated with his conceptions he heeds not the warnings of the scholars who remonstrate with him ; but in the third scene, by the charm of a Latin invocation, calls up Mephistophilis. An argument takes place between the two, in which the magnate of hell declares that the conjuring of Faustus was only the accidental cause of his appearance—

For when we hear one rack the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul :
Nor will we come unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damned.
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure all godliness,
And pray devoutly to the Prince of Hell.

Another idea, however, is prevalent at the present day as to the raising of spirits, though whether it is yet sufficiently successful to have caused Mephistophilis to revise his opinions we are unable to say. Returning to Marlowe, in this third scene occurs a passage which the commentators have pointed out as having suggested a striking figure to Milton, though the discovery is one which would be made by any reader of the two poets. After Mephistophilis has informed Faustus that he is for ever damned in hell with Lucifer, the following dialogue occurs :—

Faust. How comes it, then, that thou art out of Hell ?

Meph. Why, this is Hell ; nor am I out of it.

Think'st thou that I that saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand Hells
In being deprived of everlasting bliss ?

This passage immediately brings to mind familiar lines in *Paradise Lost*, but especially the one—

Which way I fly is Hell ; myself am Hell.

The idea is thus incontrovertibly supported that Milton, as we have already surmised, was thoroughly versed in Marlowe's works ; but, if necessary, other extracts could be given which would make the tale of proof irrefragable. There is one scene in the second act of the drama of *Faustus*—that in which is beheld a procession before the Doctor of the Seven Deadly Sins—which must have been one of the interpolations in the text complained of, and not Marlowe's work. The humour is somewhat common and coarse, and various lines, as is the case with other passages which could be cited, are weak and halting. In the third act, we return again to the real author, where Faustus and his infernal tutor play their mad pranks upon the Pope, to the scandal of the cardinals, friars, and bishops. The drama proceeds, very unevenly in merit, it must be confessed, till in the fifth scene Helen of Troy is introduced to Faustus, who thus addresses her—

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
 And burnt the topless towers of Ilium ?
 Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
 Her lips suck forth my soul ! See where it flies ;
 Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
 Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
 And all is dross that is not Helena.
 I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
 Instead of Troy shall Wittenburg be sacked ;
 And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
 And wear thy colours on my plumed crest ;
 Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
 And then return to Helen for a kiss.
 Oh ! thou art fairer than the evening air
 Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars ;
 Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
 When he appeared to hapless Semele.

But the season of voluptuous delights is now fast waning. The hour draws nigh when the final condition of the contract sealed with his blood must be completed, and as it approaches the dramatist makes Faustus already suffer the mental tortures of the lost. A vision of the terrible nature of his fate passes before him, and he comprehends something of its horrors. Nor is this all ; the being to whom he gave the indelible writing laughs at his tears and bids him despair, for such is his fate, since "fools that will laugh on earth must weep in hell." And then comes the rejoicing (which is always depicted as keener than paradisaal bliss), that one irremediably doomed and godless soul feels over another whom it has dragged into the same dark and everlasting abyss. All this we behold faithfully and powerfully drawn in the concluding pages of this enthralling drama. Then arrives the final anguish of Faustus before his destruction, when he emits the agonising cry as he nears that awful midnight—

Oh, I'll leap up to heaven ! Who pulls me down ?
 See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament :
 One drop of blood will save me. Oh, my Christ
 Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ ;
 Yet will I call on him. Oh, spare me, Lucifer !—
 Where is it now ?—'tis gone !
 And see, a threatening arm, an angry brow !
 Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
 And hide me from the heavy wrath of heaven.
 No !
 Then will I headlong run into the earth ;
 Gape earth ! O no, it will not harbour me.
 You stars that reigned at my nativity,
 Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
 Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist,
 Into the entrails of yon labouring cloud ;
 That, when ye vomit forth into the air
 My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths ;
 But let my soul mount and ascend to heaven.

[The clock strikes the half-hour.

Oh, half the hour is past ; 'twill all be past anon.
 Oh, if my soul must suffer for my sin,
 Impose some end to my incessant pain.
 Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years—
 A hundred thousand—and at last be saved ;
 No end is limited to damnèd souls.
 Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul ?
 Or why is this immortal that thou hast ?

* * * * *

[*The clock strikes twelve.*]

It strikes ! it strikes ! Now, body, turn to air,
 Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.

[*Thunder and rain.*]

O soul ! be changed into small water-drops,
 And fall into the ocean : ne'er be found.

[*Enter the devils.*]

Oh ! mercy, heaven, look not so fierce on me !
 Adders and serpents ; let me breathe awhile.
 Ugly hell, gape not !—Come not, Lucifer !
 I'll burn my books —Oh, Mephistophilis !

The crushing eloquence of this stupendous burst of feeling falters a little in the last four lines, but taken altogether it is a prodigious effort. One is rather curious in speculating upon what Shakspeare would have made of this catastrophe, which is, perhaps, the finest single incident in the world for the writer of tragedy ; but it is questionable whether even he could have accomplished a more impassioned strain, or one so suitable to the dread conception.

The Jew of Malta inevitably challenges comparison with *The Merchant of Venice* as regards its leading character. Marlowe's play is worth little except for the strong individuality with which his Jew is put upon the canvas. The avarice of the race to which Barabas belongs is forcibly exemplified, but the exaggerations of the populace respecting the excesses of the Jews which were prevalent in his day have been adopted by the dramatist in order to heighten the effect of his work. The passions of the Jew are greatly distorted, and before Marlowe has arrived at the end of his drama he has lost control over its leading character. From a startling realism with which he is conceived and elaborated in the earlier acts we pass on to a grotesque exhibition of fiendish traits without truthfulness to nature, till we arrive at a conclusion which, instead of evoking the sense of the sublime, rather excites the sense of the ludicrous. Very different is Shakspeare's method with Shylock, a character whose unity is preserved from his first appearance in the play till the very last. There is some degree of interest created in the daughter of Barabas, but she is too slightly sketched, a fault observable in many of the characters. Occasionally, however, we meet with isolated passages in the play which have a strong touch of the writer's best quality in them. This, for instance, is a striking simile, and one such as the author's genius is very felicitous in producing : it occurs in a soliloquy by the Jew—

Thus, like the sad presaging raven, that tolls
 The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
 And in the shadow of the silent night
 Doth shake contagion from her sable wings;
 Vexed and tormented runs poor Barabas
 With fatal curses towards these Christians.

The miser is most thoroughly devoted to his consuming passion, so much so that he affects the daring of appealing to the God of Abraham, "who with the fiery pillar led the sons of Israel through the dismal shades," to lead him safely in the quest of wealth. It is difficult to say, nevertheless, whether this passion, or the hatred of the Christians is stronger in his breast. His denunciations of the latter are most fierce and acrid, and an idea of their bitterness may be gained from the following lines in which he vents his feelings towards this "heretical" division of humanity:—

We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please,
 And when we grin we bite, yet are our looks
 As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.
 I learned in Florence how to kiss my hand,
 Heave up my shoulders when they called me dog,
 And duck as low as any barefoot friar,
 Hoping to see them starve upon a stall,
 Or else be gathered for in our Synagogue;
 That, when the offering basin comes to me,
 Even for charity I may spit into it.

This exceedingly pleasant individual is made to over-reach himself at the end of the drama in an absurd manner, and such as we should not have predicted upon our first introduction to him. In the fury begotten of his losses he almost loses his reason, and certainly all that cunning and that coolness which are supposed to distinguish his tribe in moments of supremest danger. It is here we think that the dramatist has failed. Barabas holds that "it's no sin to deceive a Christian," a doctrine which enables him to become a robber upon principle; but having been deceived in turn he is so beside himself with rage that he is incapable of doing justice to his own principle and of reducing it to practice. So, after a good deal of plotting and counterplotting—in which it must be admitted the Jew very neatly arranges that two of his enemies should kill each other—we arrive at the final stage of the play. Barabas who had prepared a very clumsy trap for certain of his enemies, falls into a much simpler one himself, and his last words to his fellow mortals are oaths and execrations. Amidst these he expires, and the Christians feel that they are relieved of a bugbear. The second part of the drama does not display the careful workmanship to be found in the preceding acts; it is as if the artificer had become tired of his work, and having conceived his character lacked the patience to follow out its proportions.

In every respect a contrast to this tragedy, the drama of *Edward the Second* is worthy of high commendation, though we scarcely think it

warrants the lavish praise bestowed upon it by some critics. The author is again witnessed in his real strength, master of his theme, and his verse marches with all the stateliness that should attach to the subject. As an historical play it may be at once conceded that it has had few equals, while it was the first of such plays of any moment ever produced. The weakness of Edward's character is preserved, and he is not unduly allowed to excite our pity, misfortunes rapidly accumulating upon his head through his mad partiality for the favourite Gaveston. The speeches scattered through the drama attain to a noble expression; witness that of the King to his friend Leicester after he has been placed in captivity, which is full of exalted thoughts and imagery. In his lament Edward says very finely—

The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;
But, when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
And highly scorning that the lowly earth
Should drink his blood, mounts upward to the air.
And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
Th' ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb.

The pathos of the concluding portions of this play has been rarely surpassed for its unstrained force and depth, and the drama, taken as a whole, shows what a field might have been open to Marlowe's successful cultivation, had but the Fates been propitious. He assuredly demonstrates the capacity for imagining the splendours of courts and the regal bearing of kings.

Although the next dramatic effort in order of consideration—*The Massacre of Paris*—is but a fragment, incomplete, disjointed, and unsatisfactory, it contains one of the most spirited speeches to be found within the range of the author's works; viz., that of the plotting Duc de Guise, the principal instigator of the infamous Bartholomew slaughter. The lines breathe of the cruel and ambitious spirit of this man, who was resolved to rise, although his downfall should possibly be the deepest hell, and who burned to become the great centre of interest with his countrymen, a mark which should be so conspicuous as to cause the world to wonder "as men that stand and gaze against the sun." In every other respect except that of the remarkable individuality of several of the characters, and two or three outbursts of passion, the fragment is almost worthless. *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, presents a chequered appearance in the workmanship, as though it had been collaborated by a master mind and a poetic buffoon. Much of it is unquestionably Marlowe's, but other passages, which savour of doggerel extraordinary, are as unquestionably not. It is affirmed that the dramatist's old assailant, Nash, had a finger in the completion of this drama, and if so, it is by no means the worst kind of revenge he could have taken upon the great writer, while pretending to make it a compliment. The student, however, will very easily dissect the chaff from the wheat, for Marlowe attains to a high excellence here, which only

serves to place his assistant's work in a more contemptible light. The illustrious Æneas loses much of the dignity generally associated with his character when we find him addressing Ascanius in these absurdly colloquial terms, which could not fail to arrest the attention of even the most casual reader:—

Alas ! sweet boy, thou must be still awhile,
Till we have fire to dress the meat we killed ;
Gentle Achates, reach the tinder-box,
That we may make a fire to warm us with,
And roast our new-found victuals on this shore.

This is not the "mighty line" along which the English drama advanced to perfection. But there are other passages, notably in Act II., where Æneas relates his heroic story to Dido, which could only have proceeded from Marlowe himself: they are full of strength and nervous energy. The passion of Dido, with its tragical ending, is traced with gathering feeling; and the Queen of Carthage is presented to us in a noble guise—a setting worthy of that renowned personage. The poem frequently rises into strains of great beauty, and anon swells with bold language, a suitable complement to the importance and greatness of the subject. Of *Hero and Leander*, and the remaining minor productions and translations of the dramatist, but little room is left to speak. The two first books, or Sestiads, of *Hero and Leander*, were all which Marlowe completed in their entirety; Chapman added the rest, working into his contribution some two hundred lines of another Sestiad which the conceiver of the task left behind him. The beauty and the swing of this poem have been fully and widely acknowledged; it is at times gorgeous in its imagery, and it is everywhere pervaded by a true poetic feeling. It has the merit of being as much an original work as a translation, for Marlowe did not suffer himself to be bound to the form from which he extracted the idea. We obtain a better apprehension of the width of the poet's imagination from this work than perhaps from any other which he has written. The principle upon which he translated these Sestiads he did not always carry into his translations, the reproduction of Ovid's *Elegies*, for example, being a line-for-line translation. His rendering of the *Elegies* was, after his death, fixed upon by the enraged bishops for the indignity of burning by the common hangman; but we know that the publication of the translation was not of the dramatist's own doing. Were it not for the fear of doing injustice to the reader in supposing that he was not familiar with one of the most charming pastoral poems in the English language, we should quote the lines entitled *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*, in which Marlowe has reached the perfection of sweetness and grace. It will be remembered that it was to these lines Sir Walter Raleigh indited a reply, which, though it exhibits much beauty of expression, is by no means equal to the poem that called it forth. One extraordinary translation of Marlowe's should be mentioned before closing this brief review—that, namely, of the First Book of Lucan, the latter part of which may be

described as a rushing torrent of eloquence. No halting weakness is discoverable; the second workman has entirely possessed himself of the spirit of the first, and revels in his strength of vision. The whole thing is a dazzling cornucation of metaphor, description, and illustration.

Marlowe, indubitably, was a magnificent genius. His grand imagination impressed itself even upon his own age; and those who unfeignedly disliked the man were compelled to admit his power. The charges brought against him on the ground of the negative character of his religious views received strength and importance, doubtless, from the feeling that such an individual must have immense influence over others. A connection has been established between his scepticism and those dramas in which with keen delight he dwells upon topics which were in his day supposed to be placed far above speculation and inquiry. His death was regarded as a judgment upon his wicked life, and as a reward for his blasphemy and infidelity. The terrible nature of his religious delinquencies is fully set forth in Beard's *Theatre of God's Judgments*, published in 1597. We there read that Marlowe, who is designated as "a playmaker and a poet of scurrilitie," by "giving too large a swing to his owne wit, and suffering his lust to have the full reines, fell (not without just desert) to that outrage and extremitie, that hee denied God and his sonne Christ, and not onely in word blasphemed the Trinitie, but also (as is credibly reported) wrote bookes against it, affirming our Saviour to be but a deceiver, and Moses to be but a conjurer and seducer of the people, and the Holy Bible to bee but vaine and idle stories, and all religion but a device of policie. But see what a hooke the Lord put into the nostrils of this barking dogge! So it fell out, that, as he purposed to stab one whom he owed a grudge unto, with his dagger, the other party perceiving so avoyded the stroke, that, withal catching hold of his wrist, hee stabbed his owne dagger into his owne head in such sorte that, notwithstanding all the meanes of surgerie that could be wrought, hee shortly after died thereof: the manner of his death being so terrible (for hee even cursed and blasphemed to his last gaspe, and together with his breath an oath flew out of his mouth) that it was not only a manifest signe of God's judgement, but also an horrible and fearfull terror to all that beheld him." And then the record adds, with the glee which could only fill the heart of a religious enthusiast and not of an ordinary historian, "Herein did the justice of God most notably appeare, in that hee compelled his owne hand which had written those blasphemies to bee the instrument to punish him, and that in his brain which had devised the same." A ballad, entitled *The Atheist's Tragedie*, was also published, setting forth the heinousness of Marlowe's guilt in a religious point of view; and a prose document is in existence which goes more fully than the ballad into the various points of his heterodoxy. The dramatist is charged with affirming that he could concoct a better religion than the one then in vogue; that the Apostles were base fellows, and, with the exception of Paul, were men of no wit or worth; that all Protestants were hypocritical asses; and, further (and this seems to have

been considered the acme of disgrace and villainy, for the charge is printed in italics), that he, Marlowe, had as good a right to coin as the Queen of England. There appears to have been little or no foundation for most of these charges; all is haze and perplexity in regard to them; and what positive evidence there is frequently tends to damage the character of Marlowe's assailants rather than his own. Yet as regards his theological views, the probability is that they were not more greatly unorthodox than those of many intellectual men and advanced thinkers of the present day. But the godsend of a colonial Bishop never came to the dramatist, and the full weight of religious bigotry and intolerance was thus expended upon his name and fame alone. There were none to keep him in countenance, whilst hands were lifted up in dismay and deprecation against him. We can now regard him more composedly, and in the light of his work rather than as the individual man. As an oak springing forth in an unlikely place, amongst plants and trees of puny growth, we behold this poet rising above his fellows, and stretching forth his giant arms in the early morn of dramatic literature. Appearing in an age marked by violence and excess, and devoted principally to the gratification of the fleshly lusts, the wonder is, not that he failed to disentangle himself altogether from what was impure and unworthy, but that he shook himself free so largely from the influences which had hitherto choked genius in its inception. To the prodigious strength of his own will and intellect was this result due; and though his habits may have been dissolute, and his ideas steeped in Paganism, the spirit of a sublime independence animated his soul. Beneath the full scope and license given to the passions in his works, there struggles the thought which is hereafter to make men great. His face is in shadow; it is one upon which the sun never fully shone; but even through the sombre veil which envelops it we see that the features are notable and majestic. He emerges from the darkness of one age, but does not behold the full effulgence of its successor. His perpetual tribute is that of the illustrious pioneer. He divides the honours and the crown of Columbus; for, like him, he discovered a new world.

G. B. S.

On Unaccomplished Purposes.

I READ not long ago, in the pages of this Magazine, the words—they were a quotation from the prose writings of Shelley—"A monument of an unaccomplished purpose." And they set me thinking about unaccomplished purposes generally, with or without their "monuments," the latter being immeasurably the more numerous. There are such monuments to be seen, and very sad they are to contemplate—unfinished buildings, unfinished poems, unfinished histories, unfinished romances. I never think of the words, which have been long familiar to me, without recalling my application of them, years ago, to a picturesquely-seated mansion, just twenty miles from the capital, where the noble owner and his wife dispensed their modest genial hospitality occasionally to a friend or two. There was a magnificent hall, in the Italian style, with pillars and floors in which all the marbles of Italy vied with each other for admiration, and frescoes by Keats's friend, Severn, and the commencement of a grand staircase leading heavenward; but you entered the house with this glorious *atrium* by a door of which the proprietor of a villa at Norwood or Hampstead would have been ashamed; and if not forewarned you have been startled by coming suddenly on this scrap of a palace. Of course there was a story about it. It had been designed by a previous owner of the place—a departed member of the family—whose intention it had been to erect by degrees a palatial residence, on the Surrey Hills. The site, indeed, was worthy of anything that marble and stone and the art of man could create. But death had stepped in, and the ambition of one could not be realised by the poverty of another; and so there is nothing but "a monument of an unaccomplished purpose."

I confess that I never felt any sadness in contemplating this. If the original design had been carried out, my host and hostess could not have been happier than they were. It was merely a chapter in the great history of the "vanity of human wishes" for which they were not responsible. But I have seen lesser architectural failures which have given me many pangs. It is a sad thing to see an unfinished house—and worse, an unfinished row of houses. You see many such in the suburbs of London. They suggest thoughts of broken fortunes, insolvencies, bankruptcies, perhaps workhouses in the end. Yet for more than eighteen centuries we have been declaiming against this folly. Did not our great Redeemer say: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he had laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that

behold him begin to mock him. Saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish." Yet men begin to build and are not able to finish, even by hundreds, in this nineteenth century.

I have all my life long had a morbid sensitiveness with respect to the failures of other people, though I have had failures of my own which have not much distressed me. I enter keenly into the disappointments of my neighbours. If I go to a theatre and see a "beggarly account of empty boxes," I have no pleasure in the night's performances, however good they may be. If I go to church, in town or country, and see empty pews, it saddens me to think of the unappreciated labour of the good man who has prepared a discourse for his congregation, and yet finds no congregation to listen to it—as may often, indeed, be found in the Established churches of Wales and Ireland and the temples of the City of London. The ministers are, probably, used and are reconciled to it, knowing all circumstances and conditions, but it has a depressing effect upon me. I cannot bear to hear that a friend's book has met with scant recognition from the public. I am saddened by the sight of the unsold pictures in the Exhibition-rooms at the end of the season. And so it is with respect to these unfinished houses. They may have been "run up by speculative builders," but somebody must have suffered by all this waste of brick and mortar. There they stand—"monuments of an unaccomplished purpose."

The unfinished works of builders of another kind—the monuments of which they could never write "Exegi"—the grand fragments of poetry, history, and romance, which lie before us, are still more touching, for death has closed the account. What noble purposes are here unaccomplished! Think of the unfinished poems of Shelley and Keats—of what they might have done, had they not been cut off in the flower of their youth! Think of that great history which Macaulay was to have brought down to a period "within the memory of living men"—how the greatest of the land sorrowed with a not unselfish sorrow, when they saw all that was mortal of that brilliant historian lowered into the vaults of the old Abbey, the great desire of his life unfulfilled! Think of the sudden close, in the midst of their work, of the careers of those two great novelists who were delighting us, from month to month, with their humour and their pathos! Tidings of the death of Thackeray came to me through a newspaper-placard on entering a market-town in Somersetshire; and the death of Charles Dickens startled me in the same way, as I was being driven through a townlet in Wales. I was taking a brief holiday on each occasion, and truly it may be said that I went on my way "a sadder and a wiser man." Each has left behind him a monument of an unaccomplished purpose—the one in *Dennis Donne*, the other in *Edwin Drood*. Was it for evil or for good? Was it better or worse for their memories that they died thus suddenly, in the fulness of their fame?—I mean, for their reputation's sake? I do not think that anyone had cause to write with respect to them those dreadful words, "falling off." Yet, it must come to all of us, some day, if we outlive the maturity of our powers. I have

fifty volumes of Walter Scott's novels on my book-shelves—I could not put my finger on the volume whence the decline of power is to be counted. I think it would be rather early in the series, though there is nothing finer than the *Talisman*, which now, in an operative form, is the delight of the musical world. Still, it is sad to think of his last days—of so eminently healthy an intellect in its youth and its maturity coming to what it did at the last—those sad, servile attempts not wholly to forsake the old craft—not to confess the victory of age. I remember, many years ago, in the City of London, often to have seen a venerable-looking, grey-bearded old man, apparently almost blind, turning about in a vacant sort of way the handle of an empty barrel-organ, which produced never a sound. Men's hearts soon get hardened in large towns by repeated impositions, and it is difficult to discern rightly between the reality and the sham. But, looking at it in its worst aspects, it was to me an exceedingly touching piece of acting. It brought many pennies and “fourpenny-bits” into the old man's palm. He was clinging to the old craft; he thought he was producing harmonious sounds out of that empty box. He seemed to be quite crazed. What his history was I never learnt. But I thought of the many sad spectacles that I had seen in the course of my life, of which this soundless organ reminded me—of the broken-down actors, singers, authors—of the old beaux living upon by-gone fascinations, the old diners-out on their old jests, and still thinking themselves irresistible. I was present at the last appearance of Edmund Kean on the stage—and a very painful thing it was. It is better, therefore, I think, that, at least as far as his own reputation is concerned, a great genius should be stricken down in the fulness of his work, with many unaccomplished purposes to his account. In all our English poetry there are no sadder lines than these—

From Marlborough's eyes the tears of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driveller and a show.

But, apart from these great historical monuments of unaccomplished purposes, think, too, of the number of smaller unaccomplished literary purposes discharged into the great “limbo of vanities.” For any man of active imagination to write all the books that he has purposed to write he must live twice over the longest life of the Antediluvian period. Histories—Philosophies—Dramas—Poems—Romances—Essays—whole libraries of a most comprehensive character—conceived, sketched out—written, indeed, “all but the chapters,” and in no few instances many of the chapters actually written. Who, after a long literary life, exploring the contents of old drawers, boxes, baskets, portfolios, &c., does not come across unfinished manuscripts—“essay, poem, or romance”—put aside under stress of more important business and forgotten, or never returned to for lack of time? All these are so many unaccomplished purposes on a smaller scale, not to be named with those tragic exemplars cited above, but still not un instructive. I do not speak of the dreamers,

idlers, of the world, who think that genius can carry everything before it, and who wait for "an impulse"—I speak of the genuine, honest workmen, who believe in work. But many an honest workman is not a systematic workman. There is a certain desultoriness about even the most industrious and conscientious toilers of the pen. They are somewhat prone to begin, and not to finish. When a new idea seizes them, or, what is of more importance, a new order comes, they break off from the business in hand. Perhaps they attempt too much at the same time. This may be the result of a foolish ambition, which "o'erleaps itself and falls on the other side." I knew a man who was really a hard-worker, and who had a certain versatility about him, which caused him to conceive the idea of publishing at the same time a volume of history, a collection of essays, and a novel, and to produce on the stage an Elizabethan drama in blank verse. The result of this preposterous impulse of vanity was what might be expected.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us.

The history, having been interrupted by these lesser exploits in the realms of fiction, was not brought to a conclusion within the expected time. The ambitious author having moved his residence (and "two removes are as bad as a fire"), the novel, unfinished, and the drama, completed, were lost: the former, after a year or two, turned up from the recesses of an unopened box; the latter is supposed to be passing out in dribblets from some buttermilk's shop. The essays, having already appeared in a magazine, were in type, and of course safe. And this was the issue of my friend's absurd project—this was *his* unaccomplished purpose. It served him right. His vanity, some will say, was rightly punished. I think that perhaps he was saved from a greater punishment by the mishaps which I have recorded. He had a very good reputation in a particular path of literature; but his drama, if accepted, would probably have been damned, and his novel cut to pieces by the reviewers. He had the good sense to admit all this, and I believe that he has never murmured over his "unaccomplished purpose."

But all people are not house-builders, structurally or intellectually; and unfinished houses or unfinished works are but an insignificant portion, numerically speaking, of our "unaccomplished purposes." Of course, it would not become me, in a secular essay of this kind, to write of the subject in its graver aspects—to illustrate that which Johnson so powerfully described in the well-known epigram, "Hell is paved with good intentions." How gallantly we put out to sea, sails full and streamers flowing, and how easily we go to pieces on some unseen and unsuspected rock! The great chart by which we ought to steer is laid aside and forgotten, and we yield to the first cogent temptation that assails us. The unaccomplished purpose of a good and pure life haunts us until the day of our death. But this, as I have said, is a subject for

the divine, not for the essayist. Everybody knows how, in common life, the ordinary plans and projects, on the accomplishment of which he had set his heart, have egregiously failed in the issue. They may have failed owing to force of circumstances—they may have failed owing to the absence of that strength of will, that indomitable perseverance, which alone can enable a man to work out his resolves. It has been said that every smirking barrister, on first putting on his wig and gown, believes that he will be Lord High Chancellor of England; and that every young Member of Parliament, on delivering his maiden speech, believes that he will live to be Prime Minister. There is no reason why he should not, if he has ability and perseverance, and a certain command of money. But these disappointments or non-fulfilments of the aspirations of early ambition are not to be accounted among the “unaccomplished purposes” of which I am writing. There are others, however, of a more substantial character, where the disappointment comes later in life (for we are soon purged of our early vanities), where men set themselves to the work of building up great fortunes, of founding families, of sending their names down to posterity as the first constructors of that which later history may reverence and applaud. They toil early and late. From small beginnings they produce great results. Self-denial is commonly at the root of their success. Yet self-denial, in its fulness and perfection, I do not think that I ever saw. In the lives of all economical, money-making men, there is a point of reservation—there is a weak spot in the self-denying constancy of the man. Some favourite inclination must be satisfied. It may be a love of horses—it may be something worse. I knew a man—a very honest, worthy, hard-working man—most frugal and economical, speaking scorn of those who live in fine West-end houses and gave expensive dinner-parties—he himself living, for a great part of the year, over his business works at Limehouse, and limiting himself always to a glass or two of humble port. But he always kept excellent horses and rode to hounds when the exigencies of business would permit. I remember his mounting me on a long-backed chestnut mare, of great feminine impetuosity, who rushed at her fences, and nearly broke my neck. But he always gave me the plainest fare for dinner and a shake-down on his drawing-room sofa—a “spare room” being, in his opinion, a temptation. He achieved the objects of his ambition, which were but moderate: he made provision for a very fine family. I knew, still better, another man, who vowed, early in life, never to spend more than half his income—and he kept to his resolution. But, from the earliest days of my remembrance, though tied to an arduous profession, in which, with little or no education, he achieved great success, he kept a very fine stud, and was seldom absent from the meets of the Surrey hounds. He was a marvellous exemplar of well-deserved success—for he rose from very humble beginnings, and left behind him a quarter-of-a-million of money, all earned by his industry and integrity—and he might have left behind him half-a-million, but for the fact that he left also an

immense family. He might have been the founder of a great house, but there was enmity between him and his eldest son, and the fortune was scattered; and the purpose was unaccomplished.

Another history of unaccomplished purposes is that of which the inspired writer speaks, when he says, "There is an evil and it is common among men; a man to whom God had given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanted nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God granteth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it." And again: "There is a sore evil, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt; but those riches perish by evil travail; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand." These things truly are very sad. They are what no one cannot see without deploring. I could name a lordly couple, in whom all the chivalry and the grace of the Grand Arthurian period are beautifully typified—a pair whom it would be impossible to know for a single day without love, admiration, and reverence—with high rank, with high station, with great estates, with everything that humanity could desire—in the very prime of their lives—yet wanting one thing—a direct heir. So that a stranger shall eat thereof. But how can we tell that this might not be a blessing in the end? I knew a man, some years ago, who endeared himself to many by kindnesses and courtesies, a man of the highest rank beneath royalty, who had a large family, and died broken-hearted. It would have been far better for him if he had been wifeless and childless. He might have lived to serve his country for long years, and even to take the great helm of the nation into his hand. It is sadder to think of a great name being dragged through the mire, than of its dying out, on the direct line being superseded by collaterals.

And in lower ranks of life disappointments of this kind are frequent. I had a friend of the middle-classes, who had been well, if not highly educated, devoted to literature—a close student, of an ardent nature, a dreamer of dreams, who, from his youth upwards, had one leading thought, to beget a son inheriting the paternal love of knowledge—the great desire to learn. Before he was of age, he told me, he used to have day-dreams, of the sweet delights of watching the dawning intelligence of the boy who called him father—of seeing the growing increase of knowledge, the intensifying love of literature—thinking how great a charm it would be to answer his boy's questions about Spenser, and Shakespeare, and Milton, and others of England's greatest worthies—and to talk to him about Stafford, Pym, and Hampden, his face all aglow with intellectual pleasure. Such thing must have been ere now. See that wonderful story of James and John Mill. It is a harsh, gloomy picture, and does not realise my friend's conception, but the elder Mill, doubtless, rejoiced in the precocious development of his son. He had a purpose, and it was accomplished. With my friend it was wholly different. He did beget a son—nay, he begot several. But the dreams of his youth were never realised. Not one ever loved his books, not one made any successes at school,

not one ever cared to enquire about such "old muffs" as Chaucer and Spencer, Shakespeare and Bacon. Shooting and fishing and boating—and hunting when they could get a mount—was all that they cared for. They would not work up for any learned profession, or cram for a competitive examination. So they went off to Australia, and betook themselves to places where no books are to be found. My friend has not a large estate, but he has a large library, with no one to whom to leave it—no one who would take down a volume from the shelf (barring a sensation novel) even on the wettest day. It will be dispersed to buy horses and dogs. This was *his* unaccomplished purpose.

Unaccomplished purposes of this kind are, doubtless, common, though they take different shapes. There is General Cannon, C.B., Retired List, Artillery, who has fought in all the Indian battles of the last thirty years. It was the purpose of his life to see his only son in the profession which he erst adorned. But the present system of competitive examination destroyed all his hopes—as it has destroyed, and will destroy, the hopes of hundreds of his gallant comrades. Indeed, the number of unaccomplished purposes of which that Civil Service Commission will be the fruitful parent it is difficult to conceive. A man purposes that his son shall be a soldier or a civilian, and he spends a large part of his income in qualifying the youth for the desired profession. The youngster has a fair amount of brains, he is sent to a cramming tutor, he works hard, and meanwhile his parents have to stint themselves that they may pay the cramming bills. It is no fault of the poor boy that some who compete with him have more brains and stronger nerves, and face the examiners with more success. But he fails, and there he stands, with ruined hopes, a monument of an unaccomplished purpose. What is he to do? It is too late for him in most cases to begin again. The father has thrown away a thousand pounds or more, perhaps, out of his hardly-earned pension, and has no more money to spend. The son is downcast and disappointed, and when urged to some new effort asks, "What is the use?" Well, to say the least of it, it is very hard.

And the question asked by the boy may well be asked by the nation. "What is the use of it?" What is the use of flooding the country with all these "monuments of unaccomplished purposes;" are the Public Services better recruited than of old? The Civil Service Commissioners will answer that we must wait for years to see the results of the experiments. Our successors will see them, but middle-aged men of the present time cannot live to see them—cannot see whether we shall have better soldiers than the Wellesleys, the Hardinges, the Somersets, the Cottons, the Napiers, in the English Army—or in the Indian Army than the Malcolms, the Munros, the Lows, the Outrams, the Lawrences, the Nicholsons, the Neales, and Napier of Magdala, now at its head.

And then for those boasted Indian Civil Service Examinations, which have broken so many young hearts, and impoverished so many elderly gentlemen. Are we likely to get better Indian Civil servants than the

Elphinstones, the Metcalfes, the Edmonstones, the Adams, the Bayleys, the Grants, and others, who have consolidated our great Indian Empire? A quarter of a century hence, shall we have better men than these? It is small matter to the Civil Service Commissioners if when they are in their graves India should be lost to us. Meanwhile the country is to be deluged with monuments of unaccomplished purposes, huge disappointments, festering animosities, idle hands and active brains. See that fine passage in the *Misérables* of Victor Hugo in answer to the question, "Of what is a revolt composed?" We lay too much stress upon the fact that "Englishmen are so different from Frenchmen." We are only now beginning to be subjected to the influences which may turn our national character "Frenchwards." It may not be long, perhaps, before we see the results of those "irritated convictions, embittered enthusiasms, aroused indignations, martial instincts suppressed, . . . straitened circumstances, empty dreams, ambitions surrounded by escarpments—every man who hopes for an issue from an overthrow." Every year the number of the dangerous middle-classes increases—the disappointed candidates for place, civil or military—who have failed in the great object of their lives, wasted their time, wasted their money, and found themselves cast helpless on the world. I know a man highly educated both at Cambridge and at a cramming tutor's, who missed the Indian Civil Service by a few marks, and is now driving or pushing a costermonger's barrow. If there is no danger looming in the distance from this source of trouble, we must be a lethargic people.

Then there is another very painful aspect in which we must regard the cruelty of these Civil Service Examinations. Supposing that the purpose is accomplished—Well! The young man gets his military commission or his civil appointment—and there is great rejoicing, but at what cost has the success been gained? There are, doubtless, some hardy youths, with robust constitutions, strong nerves, and bright intelligences—quick learners, with retentive memories. These are the men to struggle through without injury to themselves. But they are the minority. The greater number suffer grievously during that sharp contest, and come forth feeble, pallid, emaciated—with racking headaches, clouded brains, and shattered nerves. If these youngsters, their purposes accomplished, are the same men, on entering the army, as they would have been without the help of the cramming tutors, we certainly have not to thank the Civil Service Commissioners for the fortunate result. But it is far more likely that we are pursuing a system, which will tend to fill the commissioned ranks of our army with men of enfeebled constitutions. And as to those, who have fallen by the wayside, the youths of "unaccomplished purposes"—they have, perhaps, toiled more severely than their successful competitors, because they have had less apprehensive and retentive brains, and, therefore, there has been greater necessity for them to work early and late, and to resort to wet towels and strong coffee. One youngster may take three hours to learn what another picks up in one—and yet the slower worker

partly from want of nerve, partly from failure of memory, in the dread hour of examination, may not produce it half as well as his more robust, quick-witted competitor though he really knows it much better. Then he fails; his purpose is unaccomplished, and the sharp pangs of disappointment come to aggravate the evils of the over-cramming. And this is not for a month or for a year—but for a life. Many, successful or unsuccessful, never recover. Ask members of Medical Boards what they know about it. I have asked, and the answer always is most sad.

But this has carried me into graver and sadder paths than I purposed to explore—and they are appreciable, perhaps, only by the few. I will turn to things which we all understand. Of all unaccomplished purposes the most numerous are those which spring from the determination to be “more economical in future.” We find that we are living beyond our income, or putting by nothing for our children, and we determine to retrench. We will give fewer dinner-parties, or none; we will drink less wine, and give up that expensive dry champagne altogether; we will walk instead of ride, curbing the propensity to fling ourselves into Hansom-cabs on warm days; we will leave off giving costly wedding presents; we will forget the existence of Patti and Trebelli (or live on the ineffaceable memory of Maffeo Orsini), and forswear operas and theatres altogether; we will give no joint-stock little dinners at Greenwich or Richmond; and we will try to persuade our feminine belongings not to wear so many fine dresses. And if these things do not have the desired effect, we must go into a smaller house and reduce our establishment of servants. But what comes of it all? The resolution is formed in the best possible faith, but there is always some excuse for departing from it. We salve our consciences by saying, “Oh! but this is quite an exceptional case.” And there are so many exceptions that they do not prove the rule, but make it. Our old friend Justus has been made a Master in Chancery, or our some-time favourite schoolfellow Martius has come home from India with the Bath and the Victoria Cross. In such exceptional circumstances a little dinner is inevitable. Then the doctor tells us that dry champagne is good for us, and we argue that it is better to submit to the expense than to be ill, and thus to curtail our powers of work. “It pays for itself in the end.” Our pretty niece Camilla is about to make a good marriage, and we must give *her* a wedding present—some trifle from Howell and James’s—or we shall be “unlike the rest of the family.” Our married daughter, Marcella, has come up from Northumberland on a visit, and we must treat her to a box at the Opera. Then it is “all very well to talk of walking to the station on a hot day, when one gets heated and catches cold on the railway, perhaps congestion of the lungs.” And as to the Richmond party, Criticus exhorts us thereto, and Criticus is a very influential reviewer, and we are bringing out a new book. It would not do to offend Criticus; and so we go on, in casuistical manner, trying to persuade ourselves that each is an exceptional case, and that everything that we do is for “our good in the end.” So this

year's expenditure is not less than the last, and our economy is consigned to the limbo of unaccomplished purposes.

In connection with these broken promises is the resolution so often formed to keep our accounts more regularly and accurately, and to put down everything we spend ; so much money slips away unaccounted for and gives no sign. We can regulate our expenditure so much better if we know exactly what we spend. And so we purchase a pocket account-book, and go into it with vigorous conscientiousness, putting down every fraction spent, even to the penny given to the beggar or the cross-sweeper on the road. And how proud we are when we balance the account, and find that we can make out the proceeds of our last cheque for "cash" even to a farthing! The success of this ought to be encouraging—it ought to urge us forward in our virtuous career. But we soon begin to relax—we are tired when we reach home in the evening, and we cannot remember everything next morning ; and there is an *hiatus valde deflendus* in the box, and we make up the amount by the insertion of the comprehensive word "sundries," and we grow weary of the whole business, and there is an end of it—a month, at the farthest, renders this account-keeping an unaccomplished purpose. Something of the same kind—indeed, a kindred vanity—is the resolution so often formed to "keep a journal." I know some men who have done it in the most elaborate and unflinching manner, and very useful it has been to them and others. But most people fail egregiously. Even if the diary, in a pocket-book, or in one of Mr. Letts' valuable manuals, is intended to contain nothing more than—"May 15—dined with ——. Had brougham from livery-stables ;" or, "May 20—new pair of boots from —'s," it is useful as a check on one's tradesmen. Many guineas may be saved every year by keeping even such a scant diary as this. It is a great thing even to know where you were on a certain day, for if you were at Kissengen on the 20th of August you could not have had that barouche to Richmond or that new pair of "side-spring" boots, either for yourself or wife. Of course, everyone has a sort of general notion of one's whereabouts at a particular time, but I have found many people grievously at fault, on the subject of dates ; and documentary evidence of any kind is better even than the best of memories. Yet, as I have said, this journal-keeping is as fallible as account-keeping—the purpose is unaccomplished—it stares us in the face, in the shape of brief fragments, which we come upon years afterwards, reminding us of our failures. This relates only to the domestic side of journal-keeping. But how many men there are who, having mixed much with the world, regret at the close of their career that they have not kept some record of their experiences—of all that they have seen and heard—of the historical personages whom they have met and conversed with—of anecdotal reminiscences, which years afterwards might be of value to the public and their families. "Ah!" they say, "if I had only done what — and — have done—if I had only kept steadily to my original purpose, I might have beaten them." Of course a man has no

right to complain that he is beaten; and he does not complain. He admits the truth of the maxim—*perseverantia vincit*. But how few of us can persevere! We are always forming plans and always departing from them.

Even in respect of our promised pleasures we are always halting and wavering, and never in the end bringing our purposes to the point of accomplishment. There is, for example, that visit to Italy, which I have been purposing to pay during at least five-and-twenty years. What have I done? I have sketched out the tour—studied many descriptive volumes in poetry and prose—Eustace, Beckford, Byron, Shelley, Rogers, Barratt, Browning, and others—supplemented by the meaner but more practical works of Murray and Bradshaw. Moreover, I have given several of my friends a great deal of trouble by seeking the results of their personal experiences. And all with what effect? Circumstances were against me in my prime—want of railways, want of time, want of money; and now that I am a sexagenarian and can go if I wish, I do not much care about going. There are railways and guide-books, and the journey is comparatively short, but Continental railway travelling to one somewhat wanting in health, and sadly deficient in lingual resources, is not very inviting to an old man. So I have been fain to substitute Bath for Florence, Tenby for Naples, York for Capri, and the Teign for the Arno. I am not sure that to a sick or a toil-worn man these schemes of travel have not something bracing in them. The tonic properties of hope are very invigorating. Who knows that I might not have got as much good out of the purpose as out of the fact? I might have caught a fever at Rome or been drowned, like Shelley, in the Bay of Spezzia, or taken up as a spy during the war which united Italy—or been inspired to join Garibaldi and shot. So perhaps, after all, it is better that I have never visited

— that land

Where the poet's lute and the painter's hand
Are most divine; where earth and sky
Are picture both and poetry.

We have noble cities and lovely bays and beautiful rivers at home, and we can reach them at small expense and little trouble, and find comfortable hotels and apartments, and people speaking our own language, and everything, whether we be sick or whether we be well, to meet our requirements (including plenty of water), and there is no bustle, no excitement. You are not perpetually called upon to *do* this place or the other. You may drowse away your holiday as quietly as you like.

I am disposed to think that many monuments of unaccomplished purposes are the results of certain changes within ourselves—changes of opinion or of feeling, making us take different views of the advisability of our projects, than those which we had originally conceived. An increase of experience leads us to discover

Some unexpected germ
Of failure in the scheme—

the scheme which we had so much cherished. We had started from false premisses. We had not calculated the influences of changes of age and health—of changes of circumstances and conditions—which convert that which we had thought so luscious in the prospect into nothing better than “Dead Sea fruit” in the mouth. I knew a man who, when of more than middle age, had set his heart on the possession of a garden, and especially upon the culture of roses. He was a toiler in the great city, with a cottage in the suburbs, and a garden at the back not much larger than the dinner-table of a civic corporation. That little bit of garden was a delight to him. He designed it himself, he worked in it himself, he knew every flower in it. When he returned from office, on summer evenings, aided by one who loved him, it was a pleasure to him to water all his flowers. He picked the worms out of the rose-buds with his own hand; he watched the expansion of every blossom. On the cool early mornings, ere the world was astir, he would leave his writing-table at odd times to mark the progress made by his flowers under the silent stars, or the good done by the nightly rain-fall. And he praised God for giving him such a harmless source of pleasure.

But in an evil hour he began to think that what was so delightful on a small scale must be still more enjoyable on a larger one. So he took a house with nearly a couple of acres of garden-ground. He had built, for himself, a tiny little conservatory at the back of his cottage, in which he stored a few plants—and now, in his new residence, he was master of a magnificent palace of “glass.” Of course he was compelled to have a gardener, with occasional help. There were flowers enough, and fruit enough, and vegetables for half-a-dozen families, but the luckless possessor soon found that nothing was his own. Everything was the gardener’s—“my roses,” “my grapes,” “my pears,” &c. If the master, to amuse himself, put a prod into the earth to see how the potatoes were coming on, his highness the gardener scowled. If his master made any suggestion to him, he was sure either openly to argue the point in a supercilious manner, as if the governor were a fool, or tacitly to disobey his orders. So my friend took another gardener. Though an honest and a pleasanter fellow, he was much of the same type. Everything was his, not his master’s. The potatoes were never fit to be dug, the peas were never fit to be picked, the carrots were never fit to be pulled. Even if the flowers, which were multitudinous, were wanted for the decoration of the house, they were grudgingly given, and the idea of sending some flowers and fruit to a neighbour or to a distant friend was pure sacrilege. Then his pears and plums disappeared mysteriously in the night, with or without the knowledge of the gardener; and at last my friend said to me with something like an oath, “After all, the greengrocer is better.” It was certainly cheaper and less aggravating. The gardener cost him twice as much as he had calculated. What with purchase of fresh plants, loads of manure, fuel and repairs to the glass-houses, it would have been a costly pleasure to a man of modest means, but it

was not a pleasure under these altered conditions ; so he soon began to deplore the mistake he had made, to wish himself back in his little cottage and his garden the size of a table-cloth.

Then it happened that the "fortunate" possessor of the garden, which everyone admired and envied, fell sick and was compelled to be absent, in search of health, during the greater part of the summer. Sick men are notoriously capricious. So when he returned at intervals to his own house, he looked upon all his bright pastures of flowers not with mere passive indifference, but with something approaching active dislike. He could seldom be induced to tread his garden-walks, and a bunch of roses presented to him by the hand of affection had no more charm for him than if they had been onions. He seemed to be haunted by the continual presence of an "unaccomplished purpose." The sight of the gardener was as of a grim apparition to him. He would as soon have lived in the Black Country. It was a relief to him to get away—to a London lodging, to apartments at the seaside—"anywhere, anywhere out of" his home. There was, perhaps, a little touch of mania in this, but it all came out of the sickening sense of disappointment—the feeling that the more money he spent the less enjoyment he had of his flowers—that he had reared for himself a monument of an unaccomplished purpose, and that he was fain to fly away from the sight of it.

This, perhaps, if not an exceptional case, is one of no very frequent recurrence—though, indeed, many men have been happier in their small houses with their small gardens than as possessors of lands and tenements of much larger dimensions. But how numerous are the instances of men who have in early life had an entire desire to be rich—who have spent all their best years in money-making—who have been happy and proud and exulting, when for the first time they have found themselves with a hundred pounds to the good. Next year, perhaps, their banking books show a balance of two hundred pounds. Then comes the grand idea of investing ! How proud is the investor ! He has money in the funds. His business is going on prosperously. It has every prospect of increasing. He thinks that he may take a wife, at no very distant period. He has some nice girl in the prospect—and, after another year, he will be able to furnish a little house in the suburbs and commence house-keeping on his own account. All this is pure happiness to him. His early dreams are realised. He has got his little wife, a modest, thrifty, unassuming young woman, good-tempered and easily pleased. The little house and the little garden are all that they can wish—and, as the income continues to increase, they can allow themselves fresh comforts. But, after a time, there comes in a sharp desire to save—little children enter the world and they must be provided for. Still there is enough of income to provide every comfort—and they go on very happily in a larger house and with a slightly-increased establishment. But after a time the man really becomes rich ; he takes a still larger house ; he lives in a grander style, in a more fashionable neighbourhood ; he has servants, and he gives dinner parties

with good wine, and there are a thousand nameless, unintelligible sources of expenditure which frighten him grievously.

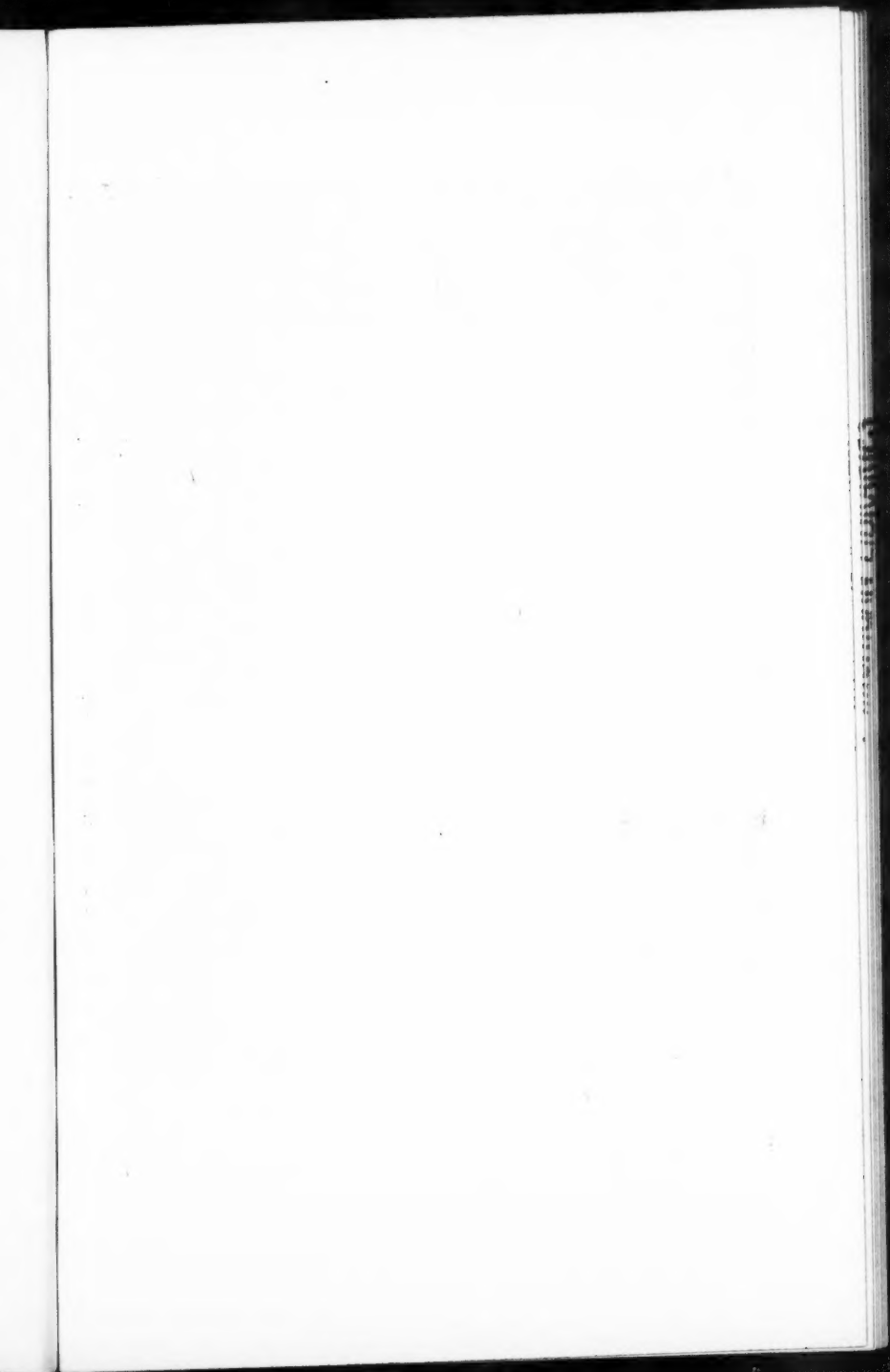
If a man thinks that by taking a new house, twice the size and rent of his old, doubles the number of his servants and the number of his horses, at only double the cost of his former establishment, he is very much mistaken. Expenses beget expenses. So the poor man, who lived so happily in his small way, is now, in his great way, tortured with doubts and fears. There may be no occasion for them; but it is well known that many men with large means have fretted themselves to death with the maniacal thought that they would end their days in the mad-house. Our friend was not so insane as this; but he felt, every day, that he had been happier in his suburban residence. He missed the friends and neighbours who dropped in on summer evenings to smoke a cigar in the back garden, and to talk over the day's news. He felt out of place and uncomfortable, like a man whose clothes are too large for him. His greatest comfort was that his wife thoroughly agreed with him, for most wives delight in increased grandeur, whatever their husbands may think. So the end of it was, that the good man became rich, the dream of his youth was realised, and yet it was an "unaccomplished purpose" after all, for he had been happier with his modest competence.

But I have no doubt that many of these unaccomplished purposes have their compensations. We do not know how it would have been if the out-turn had been different. We might have been less happy if we had succeeded. We have seen many of our contemporaries eager in money-making—living in splendid houses, driving fine carriages, chairmen or members of boards—flushed with the thought of new speculations, which "must succeed"—whilst we loiter on, in our lazy fashion, speculating not at all, but seeking modest profits only from legitimate sources, and living in a hum-drum sort of way upon them. We have very soon reason to rejoice. A smash comes: the great companies collapse; the grand new speculations turn out costly failures; the "fortunate" dweller in Belgravia sells his furniture and horses, perhaps his wife's jewels—shuts up his house and subsides, lucky if he can go into peaceful retirement, without being howled and screeched at by those whom he has ruined. Happy would it have been for him, if his purposes had been unaccomplished. Happy would it have been for him, if he had burnt his fingers at the outset, and halted in his mad career of speculation. Again, a man's failures have a sobering influence upon his character. He has learnt to value himself at his true worth. He knows the extent of his powers. He does not aim at anything beyond the exact point to which he feels that he is capable of advancing. All the old restlessness passes away from him; he is quiet, peaceful, content. His purposes are unaccomplished, but he is happy. If he can see in his unaccomplished purposes the hand of God, and he can say "The Almighty knows what is good for me," then there is clear gain. In truth, there is nothing but this that can

really reconcile us to our failures. Infinite consolation is offered to him, if he will only receive it. "All God's providences, all God's dealings with us, all His judgments, mercies, warnings, deliverances tend to peace and repose as their ultimate issue. All our troubles and pleasures here, all our anxieties, fears, doubts, difficulties, hopes, encouragements, afflictions, losses, attainments tend this one way. After the fever of life, after weariness, sicknesses, fightings and despondings, languor and fretfulness, struggling and succeeding; after all the chances and changes of this troubled state, at length comes death, at length the white throne of God, at length the Beatific Vision." This from one of Newman's sermons, and very true and beautiful it is. And another writer says, "And so as you pass on, stage by stage, in your courses of experience, it is made clear to you that whatever you have laid upon you to do or to suffer, whatever to surrender or to conquer, is exactly the best for us."* In this light viewing all things we cannot despond. We have failed, but we are determined never to go into battle again.

There are few men who do not feel painfully in their heart of hearts, that they themselves have been failures, and who do not know the causes of it. But the outside world does not know it. Some men were talking one day about failures, when one present, with no mock-modesty, but with a profound sense of the truth which he was uttering, said, "I am the greatest failure of all." Others thought that he was only jesting or seeking a compliment, for he had gained honours from his sovereign and applause from the public. But he knew that he ought to have done more: he knew what numbers of hours he had wasted; he knew that he had often given himself up to pleasure, not always of the most harmless kind, when he ought to have given it up to work; he had not turned his opportunities to the best account. He was not an ambitious man; he was perfectly contented with what he had got. Sometimes, indeed, he thought that he had got more than he deserved. It might or might not have been so. His friends prophesied further distinctions. He shook his head. He would not ask for them; he did not want them. So he passed on, seeking nothing, striving not at all; and whether his purposes were accomplished or unaccomplished, he was perfectly content. And he grew more so when the faith found entrance into his heart, that all things, under God's hand, are for the best; that whatever our crosses may be, they may be borne lightly, with the thought that some good will surely come out of them. "I shall see, some day," he says, "that this is for my good," and that there are few of us, in this belief, who do not, sooner or later, see that it is so.

* "The New Life." Both passages are taken from a little volume called "Rays of Sunlight for Dark Days," compiled by Dr. Vaughan, Master of the Temple. There should be a copy of it in every house.





THE WHITE FIGURE OF A LADY SUDDENLY APPEARED AT THE DOOR.

Three Feathers.

CHAPTER V.

THROWING A FLY.



HARRY TRELYON had a cousin named Juliott Penaluna, who lived at Penzance with her father, an irascible old clergyman, who, while yet a poor curate, had the good fortune to marry Mrs. Trelyon's sister. Miss Juliott was a handsome, healthy, English-looking girl, with blue eyes and brown hair, frank enough in her ways, fairly well-read, fond of riding and driving,

and very specially fond of her cousin. There had never been any concealment about that. Master Harry, too, liked his cousin in a way, as he showed by his rudeness to her; but he used plainly to tell her that he would not marry her; whereupon she would be angry with him for his impertinence, and end by begging him to be good friends again. At last she went, as her mother had done before her, and encouraged the attentions of a fair, blue-eyed, pensive young curate, who was full of beautiful enthusiasms and idealisms, in which he sought to interest the mind of this exceedingly practical young woman, who liked cliff-hunting, and had taught herself to swim in the sea. Just before she pledged her future to him, she wrote to Harry Trelyon, plainly warning him of what was going to happen. In a fashion she asked for his advice. It was a

timid letter for her to write, and she even showed some sentiment in it. The reply, written in a coarse, sprawling, schoolboy hand, was as follows:—

“Trelyon Hall, Monday Afternoon.

“Dear Jue,—All right. You're a fool to marry a parson. What would you like for a wedding present?

“Affectionately yours,

“HARRY TRELYON.”

Posts don't go very fast in Cornwall; but, just as soon as a letter from Penzance could reach him, Master Harry had his answer. And it was this:—

“The Hollies, Penzance, Wednesday.

“Dear Harry,—I am glad to receive a letter from you in which there is no ill-spelling. There is plenty of ill-temper, however, as usual. You may send your wedding presents to those who care for them: I don't.

“JULIOTT PENALUNA.”

Master Harry burst into a roar of laughter when he received that letter; but, all the same, he could not get his cousin to write him a line for months thereafter. Now, however, she had come to visit some friends at Wadebridge; and she agreed to drive over and join Mrs. Trelyon's little dinner-party, to which Mr. Roscorla had also been invited. Accordingly, in the afternoon, when Harry Trelyon was seated on the stone steps outside the Hall door, engaged in making artificial flies, Miss Penaluna drove up in a tiny chariot drawn by a beautiful little pair of ponies; and when the boy had jumped down and gone to the ponies' heads, and when she had descended from the carriage, Master Harry thought it was time for him to lay aside his silk, rosin, feathers, and what not, and go forward to meet her.

“How are you, Jue?” he said, offering to kiss her, as was his custom; “and where's your young man?”

She drew back, offended; and then she looked at him, and shrugged her shoulders, and gave him her cheek to kiss. He was only a boy, after all.

“Well, Harry, I am not going to quarrel with you,” she said, with a good-natured smile; “although I suppose I shall have plenty of cause before I go. Are you as rude as ever? Do you talk as much slang as ever?”

“I like to hear *you* talk of slang!” he said. “Who calls her ponies Brandy and Soda? Weren't you wild, Jue, when Captain Tulliver came up and said, ‘*Miss Penaluna, how are your dear Almonds and Raisins?*’”

“If I had given him a cut with my whip, I should have made him dance,” said Miss Juliott, frankly; “then he would have forgotten to turn out his toes. Harry, go and see if that boy has taken in my things.”

"I won't. There's plenty of time; and I want to talk to you. I say, Jue, what made you go and get engaged down in Penzance? Why didn't you cast your eye in this direction?"

"Well, of all the impertinent things that I ever heard!" said Miss Juliott, very much inclined to box his ears. "Do you think I ever thought of marrying *you*?"

"Yes, I do," he said, coolly; "and you would throw over that parson in a minute, if I asked you—you know you would, Jue. But I'm not good enough for you."

"Indeed, you are not," she said, with a toss of the head. "I would take you for a gamekeeper, but not for a husband."

"Much need you'll have of a gamekeeper when you become Mrs. Tressider!" said he, with a rude laugh. "But I didn't mean myself, Jue. I meant that if you were going to marry a parson, you might have come here and had a choice. We can show you all sorts at this house—fat and lean, steeples and beer-barrels, bandy-legged and knock-kneed, whichever you like—you'll always find an ample assortment on these elegant premises. The stock is rather low, just now,—I think w'e've only two or three; but you're supplied already, ain't you, Jue? Well, I never expected it of you. You were a good sort of chap at one time; but I suppose you can't climb trees any more now. There, I'll let you go into the house; all the servants are waiting for you. If you see my grandmother, tell her she must sit next me at dinner—if a parson sits next me, I'll kill him."

Just as Miss Juliott passed into the Hall, a tall, fair-haired, gentle-faced woman, dressed wholly in white, and stepping very softly and silently, came down the staircase, so that, in the twilight, she almost appeared to be some angel descending from heaven. She came forward to her visitor with a smile on the pale and wistful face, and took her hand and kissed her on the forehead; after which, and a few words of enquiry, Miss Penaluna was handed over to the charge of a maid. The tall, fair woman passed noiselessly on, and went into a chamber at the further end of the hall, and shut the door; and, presently, the low, soft tones of a harmonium were heard, appearing to come from some considerable distance, and yet filling the house with a melancholy and slumberous music.

Surely it could not be this gentle music which brought to Master Harry's face a most un-Christian scowl? What harm could there be in a solitary widow wrapping herself up in her imaginative sorrow, and saturating the whole of her feeble, impressionable, and withal kindly nature with a half-religious, half-poetic sentiment? What although those days which she devoted to services in memory of her relatives who were dead—and, most of all, in memory of her husband, whom she had really loved—resembled, in some respects, the periods in which an opium-eater resolves to give himself up to the strange and beautiful sensations beyond which he can imagine no form of happiness? Mrs. Trelyon was nothing of a zealot or devotee. She held no particular doctrines; she did not even countenance High Church usages, except in so far as music and

painting and dim religious lights aided her endeavours to produce a species of exalted intoxication. She did not believe herself to be a wicked sinner, and she could not understand the earnest convictions and pronounced theology of the Dissenters around her. But she drank of religious sentiment as other persons drink in beautiful music; and all the aids she could bring to bear in producing this feeling of blind ecstasy she had collected together in the private chapel attached to Trelyon Hall. At this very moment she was seated there alone. The last rays of the sun shone through narrow windows of painted glass, and carried beautiful colours with them into the dusk of the curiously-furnished little building. She herself sate before a large harmonium, and there was a stain of rose-colour and of violet on the white silk costume that she wore. It was one of her notions that, though black might well represent the grief immediately following the funeral of one's friends, pure white was the more appropriate mourning when one had become accustomed to their loss, and had turned one's eyes to the shining realms which they inhabit. Mrs. Trelyon never went out of mourning for her husband, who had been dead over a dozen years; but the mourning was of pure white, so that she wandered through the large and empty rooms of Trelyon Hall, or about the grounds outside, like a ghost; and, like a ghost, she was ordinarily silent, and shy, and light-footed. She was not much of a companion for the rude, impetuous, self-willed boy whose education she had handed over to grooms and gamekeepers and to his own very pronounced instincts.

The frown that came over the lad's handsome face as he sate on the door-step, resuming his task of making trout-flies, was caused by the appearance of a clergyman, who came walking forward from one of the hidden paths in the garden. There was nothing really distressing or repulsive about the look of this gentleman; although, on the other hand, there was nothing very attractive. He was of middle age and middle height; he wore a rough brown beard and moustache; his face was grey and full of lines; his forehead was rather narrow; and his eyes were shrewd and watchful. But for that occasional glance of the eyes, you would have taken him for a very ordinary, respectable, common-place person, not deserving of notice, except for the length of his coat. When Master Harry saw him approach, however, a diabolical notion leapt into the young gentleman's head. He had been practising the throwing of flies against the wind; and on the lawn were the several pieces of paper, at different distances, at which he had aimed, while the slender trout-rod, with a bit of line and a fly at the end of it still dangling, was close by his hand. Instantaneously he put the rod against the wall, so that the hook was floating in front of the door just about the height of a man's head. Would the Rev. Mr. Barnes look at the door-steps, rather than in front of him, in passing into the house, and so find an artificial fly fastened in his nose? Mr. Barnes was no such fool.

"It is a pleasant afternoon, Mr. Trelyon," he said, in grave and measured accents, as he came up.

Harry Trelyon nodded, as he smoothed out a bit of red-silk thread. Then Mr. Barnes went forward, carefully put aside the dangling fly, and went into the house.

"The fish won't rise to-night," said Master Harry to himself, with a grin on his face. "But parsons don't take the fly readily; you've got to catch them with bait; and the bait they like best is a widow's mite. And now, I suppose, I must go and dress for dinner; and don't I wish I was going down to Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour instead!"

But another had secured a better right to go into Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour.

CHAPTER VI.

THE — AMONG THE TAILORS.

THIS other gentleman was also dressing for Mrs. Trelyon's dinner-party, and he was in a pleased frame of mind. Never before, indeed, had Mr. Roscorla been so distinctly and consciously happy. That forenoon, when his anxiety had become almost distressing—partly because he honestly liked Wenna Rosewarne and wanted to marry her, and partly because he feared the mortification of a refusal—her letter had come; and, as he read the trembling, ingenuous, and not-very-well-composed lines and sentences, a great feeling of satisfaction stole over him, and he thanked her a thousand times, in his heart, for having given him this relief. And he was the more pleased that it was so easy to deal with a written consent. He was under no embarrassment as to how he should express his gratitude, or as to whether he ought to kiss her. He could manage correspondence better than a personal interview. He sat down and wrote her a very kind and even affectionate letter, telling her that he would not intrude himself too soon upon her, especially as he had to go up to Trelyon Hall that evening; and saying, too, that, in any case, he could never expect to tell her how thankful he was to her. That she would find out from his conduct to her during their married life.

But, to his great surprise, Mr. Roscorla found that the writing and sending off of that letter did not allay the extraordinary nervous excitement that had laid hold of him. He could not rest. He called in his housekeeper, and rather astonished that elderly person by saying he was much pleased with her services, and thereupon he presented her with a sovereign to buy a gown. Then he went into the garden, and meant to occupy himself with his flowers; but he found himself staring at them without seeing them. Then he went back to his parlour and took a glass of sherry to steady his nerves—but in vain. Then he thought he would go down to the inn, and ask to see Wenna; but again he changed his mind, for how was he to meet the rest of the family without being prepared for the interview? Probably he never knew how he passed these two or three hours: but at length the time came for him to dress for dinner.

And, as he did so, the problem that occupied his mind was to discover the probable reasons that had induced Wenna Rosewarne to promise to be his wife. Had her parents advised her to marry a man who could at least render her future safe? Or, had she taken pity on his loneliness, and been moved by some hope of reforming his ways and habits of thinking? Or, had she been won over by his pictures of her increased influence among the people around her? He could not tell. Perhaps, he said to himself, she said yes because she had not the courage to say no. Perhaps she had been convinced by his arguments that the wild passion of love, for which youth is supposed to long, is a dangerous thing; and was there not constantly before her eyes an example of the jealousy, and quarrelling, and misery that may follow that fatal delirium? Or, it might be—and here Mr. Roscorla more nearly approached the truth—that this shy, sensitive, self-distrustful girl had been so surprised to find herself of any importance to any one, and so grateful to him for his praise of her, and for this highest mark of appreciation that a man can bestow, that her sudden gratitude softened her heart, and disposed her to yield to his prayer. And who could tell but that this present feeling might lead to a still warmer feeling, under the generous influence of a constant kindness and appreciation? It was with something of wonder and almost of dismay—and with a wholly new sense of his own unworthiness—that Mr. Roscorla found himself regarding the possibility of his winning a young girl's first love.

Never before in his life—not even in his younger days, when he had got a stray hint that he would probably meet a duchess and her three daughters at a particular party—had he dressed with so much care. He was, on the whole, well pleased with himself. He had to admit that his grey hair was changing to white; but many people considered white hair, with a hale complexion, rather an ornament than otherwise. For the rest, he resolved that he would never dress again to go to any party to which Miss Wenna Rosewarne was not also invited. He would not decorate himself for mere strangers and acquaintances.

He put on a light top-coat and went out into the quiet summer evening. There was a scent of roses in the air, and the great Atlantic was beautiful and still; it was a time for lovers to be walking through twilight woods, or in honeysuckle lanes, rather than for a number of people, indifferent to each other, to sit down to the vulgar pleasures of the table. He wished that Wenna Rosewarne had been of that party.

There were two or three children at his gate—bright-cheeked, clean, and well-clad, as all the Eglosilyan children are—and when they saw him come out, they ran away. He was ashamed of this; for, if Wenna had seen it, she would have been grieved. He called on them to come back; they stood in the road, not sure of him. At length a little woman of six came timidly along to him, and looked at him with her big, wondering, blue eyes. He patted her head, and asked her name, and then he put his hand in his pocket. The others, finding that their ambassador

had not been beheaded on the spot, came up also, and formed a little circle, a cautious yard or two off.

"Look here," he said to the eldest; "here is a shilling, and you go and buy sweetmeats, and divide them equally among you. Or, wait a bit—come along with me, the whole of you, and we'll see whether Mrs. Deane has got any cake for you."

He drove the flock of them into that lady's kitchen, much to her consternation, and there he left them. But he had not got half way through the little garden again, when he turned back, and went to the door, and called in to the children—

"Mind, you can swing on the gate whenever you like, so long as you take care and don't hurt yourselves."

And so he hurried away again; and he hoped that some day, when he and Wenna Rosewarne were passing, she would see the children swinging on his gate, and she would be pleased that they did not run away.

Your Polly has never been false, she declares—

he tried to hum the air, as he had often heard Wenna hum it, as he walked rapidly down the hill, and along a bit of the valley, and then up one of the great gorges lying behind Eglosilyan. He had avoided the road that went by the inn; he did not wish to see any of the Rosewarne's just then. Moreover, his rapid walking was not to save time, for he had plenty of that; but to give himself the proud assurance that he was still in excellent wind. Miss Wenna must not imagine that she was marrying an old man. Give him but as good a horse as Harry Trelyon's famous Dick, and he would ride that dare-devil young gentleman for a wager to Launceston and back. Why, he had only arrived at that period when a sound constitution reaches its maturity. Old, or even elderly? He switched at weeds with his cane, and was conscious that he was in the prime of life.

At the same time, he did not like the notion of younger men than himself lounging about Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour; and he thought he might just as well give Harry Trelyon a hint that Wenna Rosewarne was engaged. An excellent opportunity was offered him at this moment; for as he went up through the grounds to the front of the Hall, he found Master Harry industriously throwing a fly at certain bits of paper on the lawn. He had resumed this occupation, after having gone inside and dressed, as a handy method of passing the time until his cousin Juliott should appear.

"How do you do, Trelyon?" said Mr. Roseorla, in a friendly way; and Harry nodded. "I wish I could throw a fly like you. By-the-bye, I have a little bit of news for you—for yourself alone, mind."

"All right; fire away," said Master Harry, still making the fine line of the trout-rod whistle through the air.

"Well, it is rather a delicate matter, you know. I don't want it talked about; but the fact is, I am going to marry Miss Rosewarne."

There was no more aiming at those bits of paper. The tall and handsome lad turned and stared at his companion as if the latter had been a maniac ; and then he said—

"Miss Rosewarne ? Wenna Rosewarne ?"

"Yes," said Mr. Roscorla, distinctly conscious that Harry Trelyon was regarding his white hair and general appearance.

The younger man said nothing more, but began to whistle in an absent way ; and then, just as if Mr. Roscorla had no existence whatever, he proceeded to reel in the line of his rod, he fastened the fly to one of the rings, and then walked off.

"You'll find my mother inside," he said ; and so Mr. Roscorla went into the Hall, and was soon in Mrs. Trelyon's drawing-room, among her six or eight guests.

Harry Trelyon did not appear until dinner was announced ; and then he was just in time to take his grandmother in. He took care, also, to have his cousin Juliott on his other side ; and, to both of these ladies, it was soon apparent that something had occurred to put Master Harry into one of his most insolent and rebellious moods.

"Harry ?" said his mother, from the other end of the table, as an intimation that he should say grace.

There was no response, despite Miss Juliott's appealing look ; and so Mrs. Trelyon had to turn for assistance to one of the clergymen near her, who went through the prescribed form.

"Isn't it shocking ?" said Miss Penaluna, across the table, to Harry's grandmother, who was not nearly so severe on him, for such conduct, as she ought to have been.

"Grace before meat takes too much for granted," said the young man, with a cool impudence. "How can you tell whether you are thankful until you see what sort of dinner it is ? And what's the use of feeding a dog, and barking yourself ? Ain't there three parsons down there ?"

Miss Juliott, being engaged to a clergyman, very naturally resented this language ; and the two cousins had rather a stormy fight, at the end of which Master Harry turned to his grandmother and declared that she was the only woman of common sense he had ever known.

"Well, it runs in the blood, Harry," said the old lady, "that dislike to clergymen ; and I never could find out any reason for it, except when your grandfather hunted poor Mr. Pascoe that night. Dear, dear ! what a jealous man your grandfather was, to be sure ; and the way he used to pet me when I told him I never saw the man I'd look at after seeing him. Dear, dear !—and the day he sold those two manors to the Company, you know, he came back at night and said I was as good a wife as any in England—he did, indeed—and the bracelet he gave me then, that shall go to your wife on your wedding-day, Harry, I promise you, and you won't find its match about this part of the country, I can tell you. But don't you go and sell the lordship of Trelyon. Many a time your grandfather was asked to sell it, and he did well by selling the other two ; but

Trelyon he would never sell, nor your father, and I hope you won't either, Harry. Let them work the quarries for you—that is fair enough—and give you your royalty; but don't part with Trelyon, Harry, for you might as well be parting with your own name."

"Well, I can't, grandmother, you know; but I am fearfully in want of a big lump of money, all the same."

"Money? what do you want with a lot of money? You're not going to take to gambling or horse-racing, are you?"

"I can't tell you what I want it for—not at present, any way," said the lad, looking rather gloomy; and, with that, the subject dropped, and a brief silence ensued at that end of the table.

Mr. Tressider, however, the mild and amiable young curate to whom Miss Juliott was engaged, having been rather left out in the cold, struck in at this moment, blushing slightly.

"I heard you say something about the lordships of manors," he observed, addressing himself rather to Trelyon's grandmother. "Did it ever occur to you what a powerful thing a word from William the Conqueror must have been, when it could give to a particular person and his descendants absolute possession of a piece of the globe?"

Mrs. Trelyon stared at the young man. Had a relative of hers gone and engaged herself to a dangerous Revolutionary, who, in the guise of a priest, dared to trifle with the tenure of land? Mr. Tressider was as innocent of any such intention as the babe unborn; but he was confused by her look of astonishment, he blushed more violently than before, and only escaped from his embarrassment by the good services of Miss Penaluna, who turned the whole matter into ridicule, and asked what William the Conqueror was about when he let a piece of the world come into the hands of Harry Trelyon.

"And how deep down have you a hold on it, Harry?" she said. "How far does your right over the minerals of the earth extend? From the surface right down to the centre?"

Mr. Tressider was smiling vaguely when Master Harry's eye fell upon him. What harm had the young clergyman, or any other clergyman present, done him, that he should have felt a sudden dislike to that ingenuous smile?

"Oh, no," said Trelyon, with a careless impertinence, and loud enough for two or three to hear. "William the Conqueror didn't allow the rights of the lord of the manor to extend right down to the middle of the earth. There were a good many clergymen about him; and they reserved that district for their own purposes."

"Harry," said his cousin to him, in a low voice; "is it your wish to insult me? If so, I will leave the room."

"Insult you," he said, with a laugh. "Why, Jue, you must be out of your senses. What concern have you in that warmish region?"

"I don't appreciate jokes on such subjects. My father is a clergyman, my husband will be a clergyman——"

"The greater fool you," he observed, frankly, but so that no one could hear.

"Harry," she said; "what do you mean by your dislike to clergymen?"

"Is that a conundrum?" said the unregenerate youth.

For a moment, Miss Penaluna seemed really vexed and angry; but she happened to look at Master Harry, and, somehow, her displeasure subsided into a look of good-natured resignation. There was the least little shrug of the shoulders; and then she turned to her neighbour on the right, and began to talk about ponies.

It was certainly not a pleasant dinner-party for those who sate near this young gentleman, who was more outrageously rude and capricious than ever, except when addressing his grandmother, to whom he was always courteous, and even roughly affectionate. That old lady eyed him narrowly, and could not quite make out what was the matter. Had he been privately engaged in some betting transaction that he should want this money?

When the ladies left the room, Trelyon asked Mr. Roscorla to take his place for a few minutes, and send round the wines; and then he went out and called his mother aside into the study.

"Mother," he said, "Mr. Roscorla is going to marry Wenna Rosewarne."

The tall, fair, pale lady did not seem much startled by the news. She had very little acquaintance with the affairs of the village; but she knew at least that the Rosewarne kept the inn, and she had, every Sunday morning, seen Mrs. Rosewarne and her two daughters come into church.

"That is the elder one, is it not, who sings in the choir?"

"It's the elder one," said Master Harry, who knew less about the choir.

"It is a strange choice for Mr. Roscorla to make," she observed. "I have always considered him very fastidious, and rather proud of his family. But some men take strange fancies in choosing a wife."

"Yes, and some women take precious strange fancies in choosing a husband," said the young man, rather warmly. "Why, she's worth twenty dozen of him. I don't know what the dickens made her listen to the old fool—it is a monstrous shame, that's what I call it. I suppose he's frightened the girl into it, or bought over her father, or made himself a hypocrite, and got some parson to intercede, and scheme, and tell lies for him."

"Harry," said his mother; "I don't understand why you should interest yourself in the matter."

"Oh, don't you? Well, it's only this—that I consider that girl to be the best sort of woman I've met yet—that's all; and, I'll tell you what I mean to do, mother—I mean to give her five thousand pounds, so that she shan't come to that fellow in a dependent way, and let him give himself airs over her because he's been born a gentleman."

"Five thousand pounds!" Mrs. Trelyon repeated, wondering whether her son had drank too much wine at dinner.

"Well, but look here, mother," he said, quite prepared for her astonishment. "You know I've spent very little—I've never spent anything like what I'm entitled to; and next year I shall be of age: and all I want now, is for you to help me to get a release, you know; and I am sure I shall be able to persuade old Colonel Ransome to it, for he'll see it is not any bit of extravagance on my part—speculation, or anything of that sort, you know——"

"My dear child," said Mrs. Trelyon, startled, for once, into earnestness, "you will make people believe you are mad. To give five thousand pounds to the daughter of an innkeeper, a perfect stranger, as a marriage dowry—why, Harry, what do you think people would say of such a thing? What would they say of her?"

He looked puzzled for a moment, as though he did not understand her. It was but for a moment. "If you mean what one of those parsons would say of her," he said, impetuously, while a sudden flash of anger sprang to his face, "I don't care; but my answer to it would be to kick him round the grounds and out at the gate. Do you think I'd care a brass farthing for anything these cringing sneaks might say of her, or of me, or of anybody? And would they dare to say it if you asked her here, and made a friend of her?"

"Make a friend of her!" repeated Mrs. Trelyon, almost mechanically. She did not know what length this terrible son of hers might not go.

"If she is going to marry a friend of yours, why not?"

"Harry, you are most unreasonable—if you will think it over for a moment, you will see how this is impossible. If Mr. Roscorla marries this girl, that is his own affair; he will have society enough at home, without wishing to go out and dine. He is doing it with his eyes open, you may be sure: he has far more knowledge of such affairs than you can have. How could I single out this girl from her family to make her a friend? I should have to ask her parents and her sister to come here also, unless you wish her to come on sufferance, and throw a reflection on them."

She spoke quite calmly, but he would not listen to her. He chafed and fidgeted, and said, as soon as she had finished—

"You could do it very well, if you liked. When a woman is willing she can always smooth matters down, and you might have that girl as a companion for you, and a much better companion than a lot of long-coated sneaks of parsons."

Mrs. Trelyon flushed slightly, and said, with clear emphasis:

"I presume that I am best fitted to say what society I shall keep; and I shall have no acquaintance thrust upon me whom I would rather not recognise."

"Oh, very well," said the lad, with the proud lips giving evidence of some sudden decision. "And you won't help me to get that five thousand pounds?"

"I will not. I will not countenance any such folly."

"Then I shall have to raise the money myself."

He rang a bell, and a servant appeared.

"Tell Jakes to saddle Dick and bring him round directly."

His mother let him have his own way, without word or question; for she was deeply offended, and her feeble and sensitive nature had risen in protest against his tyranny. He went off to put on a pair of riding boots and a top-coat; and by-and-by he came down into the hall again, and went to the door. The night was dark, but clear; there was a blaze of stars overhead; all the world seemed to be quivering with those white throbs of fire. The horse and groom stood at the door, their dusky figures being scarcely blacker than the trees and bushes around. Harry Trelyon buttoned up the collar of his light top-coat, took his switch in his hand, and sprang into the saddle. At the same moment the white figure of a lady suddenly appeared at the door, and came down a step or two, and said—

"Harry, where are you going?"

"To Plymouth first," the young man answered, as he rode off; "to London afterwards, and then to the devil!"

CHAPTER VII.

SOME NEW EXPERIENCES.

WHEN the first shock of fear and anxiety was over, Wenna Rosewarne discovered to her great delight that her engagement was a very pleasant thing. The ominous doubts and regrets that had beset her mind when she was asked to become Mr. Roscorla's wife seemed to disappear like clouds from a morning sky; and then followed a fair and happy day, full of abundant satisfaction and calm. With much inward ridicule of her own vanity, she found herself nursing a notion of her self-importance, and giving herself airs as if she were already a married woman. Although the engagement was kept a profound secret, the mere consciousness that she had attained to this position in the world lent a new assurance to her as she went about the village. She was gifted with a new authority over despondent mothers, and fractious children, and selfish fathers, as she went her daily rounds; and even in her own home Wenna had more attention paid to her, now that she was going to marry Mr. Roscorla.

There was but one dissident, and that was Mabyne Rosewarne, who fumed and fretted about the match, and sometimes was like to cry over it, and at other times grew vastly indignant, and would have liked to have gone and given Mr. Roscorla a bit of her mind. She pitied her poor weak sister for having been coaxed into an engagement by this designing old man; and the poor weak sister was vastly amused by her compassion, and was too good-natured to laugh at the valiant protection which this courageous young creature of sixteen offered her. Wenna let

her sister say what she pleased about herself or her future, and used no other argument to stop angry words than a kiss, so long as Mabyn spoke respectfully of Mr. Roscorla. But this was precisely what Miss Mabyn was disinclined to do; and the consequence was that their interviews were generally ended by Wenna becoming indignant, drawing herself up, and leaving the room. Then Mabyn would follow, and make up the quarrel, and promise never to offend again; but all the same she cherished a deadly animosity towards Mr. Roscorla in her heart, and, when her sister was not present, she amused her father and shocked her mother by giving a series of imitations of Mr. Roscorla's manner which that gentleman would scarcely like to have seen.

The young lady, however, soon invented what she considered a far more effectual means of revenging herself on Mr. Roscorla. She never left Wenna's side. No sooner did the elder sister prepare to go out, than Miss Mabyn discovered that she, too, would like a walk; and she so persistently did this that Wenna soon took it for granted that her sister would go with her wherever she went, and invariably waited for her. Accordingly Mr. Roscorla never by any chance went walking with Wenna Rosewarne alone; and the younger sister—herself too sulky to enter into conversation with him—used to enjoy the malicious pleasure of watching him shape his talk to suit the presence of a third person. For of course Miss Mabyn had read in books of the beautiful manner in which lovers speak to each other, and of their tender confidences as they sit by the sea or go rambling through the summer woods. Was not the time opportune for these idyllic ways? All the uplands were yellowed with tall-standing corn; the sea was as blue and as still as the sky overhead; the gardens of Eglosilyan were sweet with honeysuckle and moss-roses, and in the evenings a pale pink mist hung around the horizon, while the silver sickle of the moon came up into the violet sky, and the first pale stars appeared in the east.

"If our Wenna had a proper sort of lover," Miss Mabyn used to say to herself, bitterly, "wouldn't I scheme to have them left alone! I would watch for them like a watch-dog, that no one should come near them, and I should be as proud of him as Wenna herself; and how happy she would be in talking to me about him! But this horrid old wretch—I wish he would fall over Black Cliff some day!"

She was not aware that, in becoming the constant companion of her sister, she was affording this dire enemy of hers a vast amount of relief. Mr. Roscorla was in every way satisfied with his engagement; the more he saw of Wenna Rosewarne, the more he admired her utter self-forgetfulness, and liked a quaint and shy sort of humour that inter-fused her talk and her ways; but he greatly preferred not to be alone with her. He was then beset by some vague impression that certain things were demanded of him, in the character of a lover, which were exceedingly embarrassing; and which, if he did not act the part well, might awaken her ridicule. On the other hand, if he omitted all those

things, might she not be surprised by his lack of affection, begin to suspect him, and end by disliking him? Yet he knew that not for ten thousand worlds could he muster up courage to repeat one line of sentimental poetry to her.

He had never even had the courage to kiss her. He knew that this was wrong. In his own house he reflected that a man engaged to a woman ought surely to give her some such mark of his affection—say, in bidding her good-night; and thereupon Mr. Roscorla would resolve that, as he left the inn that evening, he would endeavour to kiss his future bride. He never succeeded. Somehow Wenna always parted from him in a merry mood. These were pleasant evenings in Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour; there was a good deal of quiet fun going on; and, if Wenna did come along the passage to the door with him, she was generally talking and laughing all the way. Of course he was not going to kiss her in that mood—as if, to use his own expression, he had been a jocular ploughboy. “Good-night, dear,” he managed to say to her on one occasion, and for ten minutes thereafter as he walked home through the darkness, he felt that his face was burning.

He had kissed her hand once. That was on his first meeting her after she had written the letter in which she promised to be his wife, and Mrs. Rosewarne had sent him into the room where she knew her daughter was alone. Wenna rose up to meet him, pale, frightened, with her eyes downcast. He took her hand and kissed it; and then, after a pause, he said, “I hope I shall make you happy.” She could not answer. She began to tremble violently. He asked her to sit down, and begged of her not to be disturbed. She was recalled to herself by the accidental approach of her sister Mabyne, who came along the passage, singing, “Oh, the men of merry, merry England,” in excellent imitation of the way in which Harry Trelyon used to sing that once famous song as he rode his black horse along the highways. Mabyne came into the room, stared, and would have gone out, but that her sister called to her and asked her to come and hold down a pattern while she cut some cloth. Mabyne wondered that her sister should be so diligent when a visitor was present. She saw, too, that Wenna's fingers trembled. Then she remained in the room until Mr. Roscorla went, sitting by a window and not overhearing their conversation, but very much inclined to break in upon it by asking him how he dared to come there and propose to marry her sister Wenna.

“Oh, Wenna,” she said, one evening some time after, when the two sisters were sitting out on the rocks at the end of the harbour, watching the sun go down behind the sea, “I cannot bear him coming to take you away like that. I shouldn't mind if he were like a sweetheart to you; but he's a multiplication-table sort of sweetheart—everything so regular, and accurate, and proper. I hate a man who always thinks what he's going to say, and always has neat sentences; and he watches you, and is so self-satisfied, and his information is always so correct. Oh, Wenna, I wish you had a young and beautiful lover, like a Prince!”

“My dear child,” said the elder sister, with a smile, “young and beautiful lovers are for young and beautiful girls, like you.”

"Oh, Wenna, how can you talk like that!" said the younger sister; "why will you always believe that you are less pretty than other people, when every one knows that you have the most beautiful eyes in all the world. You have! There's not anybody in all the world has such beautiful and soft eyes as you—you ask anybody and they will tell you, if you don't believe me. But I have no doubt—I have no doubt whatever—that Mr. Roscorla will try to make you believe you are very ugly, so that you mayn't think you've thrown yourself away."

Miss Mabyu looked very indignant, and very much inclined to cry at the same time; but the gentle sister put her hand on hers, and said—

"You will make me quarrel with you some day, Mabyu, if you are so unjust to Mr. Roscorla. You are continually accusing him of things of which he never dreams. Now he never gets a chance that he does not try to praise me in every way, and if there were no looking-glasses in the world I have no doubt he would make me believe I was quite lovely; and you shouldn't say those things of him, Mabyu—it isn't fair. He always speaks kindly of you. He thinks you are very pretty, and that you will grow up to be very beautiful when you become a woman."

Mabyu was not to be pacified by this ingenuous piece of flattery.

"You are such a simpleton, Wenna," she said, "he can make you believe anything."

"He does not try to make me believe anything I don't know already," said the elder sister, with some asperity.

"He tries to make you believe he is in love with you," said Mabyu, bluntly.

Wenna Rosewarne coloured up, and was silent for a minute. How was she to explain to this sister of hers all those theories which Mr. Roscorla had described to her in his first two or three letters? She felt that she had not the same gift of expression that he had.

"You don't understand—you don't understand at all, Mabyu, what you talk of as love. I suppose you mean the sort of wild madness you read of in books—well, I don't want that kind of love at all. There is quite a different sort of love, that comes of respect and affection and an agreement of wishes, and that is far more valuable and likely to be lasting. I don't want a lover who would do wild things, and make one wonder at his heroism, for that is the lover you get in books; but if you want to live a happy life, and please those around you, and be of service to them, you must have a very different sort of sweetheart—a man who will think of something else than a merely selfish passion, who will help you to be kind to other people, and whose affection will last through years and years."

"You have learnt your lesson very well," said Miss Mabyu, with a toss of her head. "He has spent some time in teaching you. But as for all that, Wenna, it's nothing but fudge. What a girl wants is to be really loved by a man, and then she can do without all those fine sentiments. As for Mr. Roscorla——"

"I do not think we are likely to agree on this matter, dear," said Wenna, calmly, as she rose; "and so we had better say nothing about it."

"Oh, I am not going to quarrel with you, Wenna," said the younger sister, promptly. "You and I will always agree very well. It is Mr. Roscorla and I who are not likely to agree very well—not at all likely, I can assure you."

They were walking back to Eglosilyan, under the clear evening skies, when whom should they see coming out to meet them but Mr. Roscorla himself. It was a pleasant time and place for lovers to come together. The warm light left by the sunset still shone across the hills; the clear blue-green water in the tiny harbour lay perfectly still; Eglosilyan had got its day's work over, and was either chatting in the cottage gardens or strolling down to have a look at the couple of coasters moored behind the small but powerful breakwater. But Mr. Roscorla had had no hope of discovering Wenna alone; he was quite as well content to find Mabyn with her, though that young lady, as he came up, looked particularly fierce, and did not smile at all when she shook hands with him. Was it the red glow in the west that gave an extra tinge of colour to Mr. Roscorla's face? Wenna felt that she was better satisfied with her engagement when her lover was not present; but she put that down to a natural shyness and modesty which she considered was probably common to all girls in these strange circumstances.

Mr. Roscorla wished to convoy the two young ladies back to the inn, and evidently meant to spend the evening there. But Miss Wenna ill requited his gallantry by informing him that she had intended to make one or two calls in the evening, which would occupy some time: in particular, she had undertaken to do something for Mrs. Luke's eldest girl; and she had also promised to go in and read for half an hour to Nicholas Keam, the brother of the wife of the owner of the Napoleon Hotel, who was very ill indeed, and far too languid to read for himself.

"But you know, Mr. Roscorla," said Mabyn, with a bitter malice, "if you would go into the Napoleon and read to Mr. Keam, Wenna and I could go up to Mother Luke's, and so we should save all that time, and I am sure Wenna is very tired to-day. Then you would be so much better able to pick out the things in the papers that Mr. Keam wants; for Wenna never knows what is old and new, and Mr. Keam is anxious to learn what is going on in politics, and the Irish Church, and that kind of thing."

Could he refuse? Surely a man who has just got a girl to say she will marry him, ought not to think twice about sacrificing half an hour to helping her in her occupations, especially if she be tired. Wenna could not have made the request herself; but she was anxious that he should say yes, now it had been made, for it was in a manner a test of his devotion to her; and she was overjoyed and most grateful to him when he consented. What Mabyn thought of the matter was not visible on her face.

CHAPTER VIII.

WENNA'S FIRST TRIUMPH.

THE two girls, as they went up the main street of Eglosilyan (it was sweet with the scent of flowers on this beautiful evening), left Mr. Roscorla in front of the obscure little public-house he had undertaken to visit; and it is probable that in the whole of England at that moment there was not a more miserable man. He knew this Nicholas Keam, and his sister, and his brother-in-law, so far as their names went, and they knew him by sight; but he had never said more than good-morning to any one of them, and he had certainly never entered this pot-house, where a sort of debating society was nightly held by the *habitués*. But, all the same, he would do what he had undertaken to do, for Wenna Rosewarne's sake; and it was with some sensation of a despairing heroism that he went up the steps of slate and crossed the threshold.

He looked into the place from the passage. He found before him what was really a large kitchen, with a spacious fire-place, and heavy rafters across the roof; but all round the walls there was a sort of bench with a high wooden back to it, and on this seat sate a number of men—one or two labourers, the rest slate-workers—who, in the dusk, were idly smoking and looking at the beer on the narrow tables before them. Was this the sort of place that his future wife had been in the habit of visiting? There was a sort of gloomy picturesqueness about the chamber, to be sure; for, warm as the evening was, a fire burned flickeringly in the grate; there was enough light to show the tin and copper vessels shining over the high mantelpiece; and a couple of fair-haired children were playing about the middle of the floor, little heeding the row of dusky figures around the tables, whose heads were half hidden by tobacco-smoke.

A tall, thin, fresh-coloured woman came along the passage; and Mr. Roscorla was glad that he had not to go in among these labourers to make his business known. It was bad enough to have to speak to Mrs. Haigh, the landlady of the Napoleon.

"Good morning, Mrs. Haigh," said he, with an appearance of cheerfulness.

"Good evenin', zor," said she, staring at him with those cruelly shrewd and clear eyes that the Cornish peasantry have.

"I called in to see Mr. Keam," said he. "Is he much better?"

A thousand wild suggestions flashed upon his mind. She might not recognise him. She would take him for a Scripture reader, come to hasten the poor man's death; or for the agent of some funeral company. He could not smile, as he was asking about a sick man; he could not sigh, for he had come to administer cheerfulness; and all the while, as Mrs. Haigh seemed to be regarding him, he grew more and more vexed and vowed that never again would he place himself in such a position.

"If yu'd like vor to see 'n, zor," said she, rather slowly, as if waiting.

for further explanation, "yü'll vind 'n in the rüm"—and with that she opened the door of a room on the other side of the passage. It was obviously the private parlour of the household—an odd little chamber with plenty of coloured lithographs on the walls, and china and photographs on the mantelpiece; the floor of large blocks of slate ornamented with various devices in chalk; in the corner a cupboard filled with old cut crystal, brass candlesticks, and other articles of luxury. The room had one occupant—a tall man who sate in a big wooden chair by the window, his head hanging forward between his high shoulders, and his thin white hands on the arms of the chair. The sunken cheeks, the sallow-white complexion, the listless air, and an occasional sigh of resignation told a sufficiently plain story; although Mrs. Haigh, in regarding her brother, and speaking to him in a loud voice, as if to arouse his attention, wore an air of brisk cheerfulness strangely in contrast with the worn look of his face.

"Don't yü know Mr. Roscorla, brother Nicholas?" said his sister, "Don't yü look mazed, when he's come vor to zee if yü're better. And yü be much better to-day, brother Nicholas?"

"Yes, I think," said the sick man, agreeing with his sister out of mere listlessness.

"Oh, yes, I think you look much better," said Mr. Roscorla, hastily and nervously, for he feared that both these people would see in his face what he thought of this unhappy man's chances of living. But Nicholas Keam mostly kept his eyes turned towards the floor, except when the brisk, loud voice of his sister roused him and caused him to look up.

A most awkward pause ensued. Mr. Roscorla felt convinced they would think he was mad if he offered to sit down in this parlour and read the newspapers to the invalid; he forgot that they did not know him as well as he did himself. On the other hand, would they not consider him a silly person if he admitted that he only made the offer in order to please a girl? Besides, he could see no newspapers in the room. Fortunately, at this moment, Mr. Keam himself came to the rescue by saying, in a slow and languid way—

"I did expect vor to zee Miss Rosewarne this evenin'—yaäs, I did; and she were to read me the news; but I suppose now——"

"Oh!" said Mr. Roscorla, quickly, "I have just seen Miss Rosewarne—she told me she expected to see you, but was a little tired. Now, if you like, I will read the newspapers to you as long as the light lasts."

"Why don't yü thank the gentleman, brother Nicholas?" said Mrs. Haigh, who was apparently most anxious to get away to her duties. "That be very kind of yü, zor. 'Tis a great comfort to 'n to hear the news; and I'll send yü in the papers to once. Yü come away with me, Rosana, and yü can come agwain and bring the gentleman the newspapers."

She dragged off with her a small girl who had wandered in; and Mr. Roscorla was left alone with the sick man. The feelings in his heart were

not those which Wenna would have expected to find there as the result of the exercise of charity.

The small girl came back, and gave him the newspapers. He began to read; she sat down before him and stared up into his face. Then a brother of hers came in, and he, too, sat down, and proceeded to stare. Mr. Roscorla inwardly began to draw pictures of the astonishment of certain of his old acquaintances if they had suddenly opened that small door, and found him, in the parlour of an ale-house, reading stale political articles to an apparently uninterested invalid and a couple of cottage children.

He was thankful that the light was rapidly declining; and long before he had reached his half-hour he made that his excuse for going.

"The next time I come, Mr. Keam," said he, cheerfully, as he rose and took his hat, "I shall come earlier."

"I did expect vor to zee Miss Rosewarne this evenin'," said Nicholas Keam, ungratefully paying no heed to the hypocritical offer; "vor she were here yesterday marnin', and she told me that Mr. Trelyon had zeen my brother in London streets, and I want vor to know mower about 'n, I dü."

"She told you?" Mr. Roscorla said, with a sudden and wild suspicion filling his mind. "How did she know that Mr. Trelyon was in London?"

"How did she know?" repeated the sick man, indolently. "Why, he zaid zo in the letter."

So Mr. Trelyon, whose whereabouts were not even known to his own family, was in correspondence with Miss Rosewarne, and she had carefully concealed the fact from the man she was going to marry. Mr. Roscorla rather absently took his leave. When he went outside a clear twilight was shining over Eglosilyan, and the first of the yellow stars were palely visible in the grey. He walked slowly down towards the inn.

If Mr. Roscorla had any conviction on any subject whatever, it was this—that no human being ever thoroughly and without reserve revealed himself or herself to any other human being. Of course, he did not bring that as a charge against the human race, or against that member of it from whose individual experience he had derived his theory—himself; he merely accepted this thing as one of the facts of life. People, he considered, might be fairly honest, well-intentioned, and moral; but inside the circle of their actions and sentiments that were openly declared there was another circle only known to themselves; and to this region the foul bird of suspicion, as soon as it was born, immediately fled on silent wings. Not that, after a minute's consideration, he suspected anything very terrible in the present case. He was more vexed than alarmed. And yet at times, as he slowly walked down the steep street, he grew a little angry, and wondered how this apparently ingenuous creature should have concealed from him her correspondence with Harry Trelyon, and resolved that he would have a speedy explanation of the whole matter. He was too shrewd a man of the world to be tricked by a girl, or trifled with by an impertinent lad.

He was overtaken by the two girls, and they walked together the rest of the way. Wenna was in excellent spirits, and was very kind and grateful to him. Somehow, when he heard her low and sweet laughter, and saw the frank kindness of her dark eyes, he abandoned the gloomy suspicions that had crossed his mind; but he still considered that he had been injured, and that the injury was all the greater in that he had just been persuaded into making a fool of himself for Wenna Rosewarne's sake.

He said nothing to her then, of course; and, as the evening passed cheerfully enough in Mrs. Rosewarne's parlour, he resolved he would postpone enquiry into this matter. He had never seen Wenna so pleased herself, and so determinately bent on pleasing others. She petted her mother, and said slyly sarcastic things of her father, until George Rosewarne roared with laughter; she listened with respectful eyes and attentive ears when Mr. Roscorla pronounced an opinion on the affairs of the day; and she dexterously cut rolls of paper and dressed up her sister Mabyon to represent a lady of the time of Elizabeth, to the admiration of everybody. Mr. Roscorla had inwardly to confess that he had secured for himself a most charming and delightful wife, who would make a wonderful difference in those dull evenings up at Bassett Cottage.

He only half guessed the origin of Miss Wenna's great and obvious satisfaction. It was really this—that she had that evening reaped the first welcome fruits of her new relations in finding Mr. Roscorla ready to go and perform acts of charity. But for her engagement, that would certainly not have happened; and this, she believed, was but the auspicious beginning. Of course Mr. Roscorla would have laughed if she had informed him of her belief that the regeneration of the whole little world of Eglosilyan—something like the Millennium, indeed—was to come about merely because an innkeeper's daughter was about to be made a married woman. Wenna Rosewarne, however, did not formulate any such belief; but she was none the less proud of the great results that had already been secured by — by what? By her sacrifice of herself? She did not pursue the subject so far.

Her delight was infectious. Mr. Roscorla, as he walked home that night—under the throbbing starlight, with the sound of the Atlantic murmuring through the darkness—was, on the whole, rather pleased that he had been vexed on hearing of that letter from Harry Trelyon. He would continue to be vexed. He would endeavour to be jealous without measure; for how can jealousy exist if an anxious love is not also present? and, in fact, should not a man who is really fond of a woman be quick to resent the approach of anyone who seems to interfere with his right of property in her affections? By the time he reached Bassett Cottage, Mr. Roscorla had very nearly persuaded himself into the belief that he was really in love with Wenna Rosewarne.

